

## Chapter One

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Nine men walked cautiously down the darkened hallway, their eyes alert and their wands out. Along the walls, candles flickered and outside the wind howled, a high-pitched howl that made several of the men shiver slightly. One man licked his lips nervously, his eyes darting frantically from side to side, while the others hesitated, before their gruff leader whispered something harshly and they winced and continued onwards. They all bore the standard Auror robes for the British Ministry of Magic. In between them limped a thin and ratty looking man with a haunted look in his eyes and blood running down his cheek. He winced every time he leant on his left leg and had the look of a man who was walking to his doom. As he inevitably slowed down, he was rewarded with a sharp prod of an Auror wand point, forcing him to limp on.

As the group slowly made its way to the end of the corridor, the Auror Captain frowned and gestured slowly and silently to his two companions. They both nodded and tiptoed forward, taking positions on either side of the door. The Captain motioned again and a burly Auror moved forward and levelled his wand.

*"Alohamora!"* He muttered and the door lock clicked as it was magically forced open, before swinging out with a loud screech. The Auror's winced as the noise echoed in the silent hallway and beyond, outside to the moonlight lit pathway.

*"Idiots!"* The Captain snapped softly, but his eyes were slightly fearful as he stared outside, trying to penetrate the shroud of darkness that lay. They could be anywhere...in the shadows by the tree, along the darkened wall. He breathed out deeply and his breath turned to mist as a wave of coldness swept inside the hallway as the wind shrieked again.

*"Let's go!"* He ordered quietly.

The small group stepped outside and went down the stairs. Above the stars twinkled brightly on the group as they surrounded the filthy and ratty looking man in a full circle, their wands covering every angle as they quickly stepped away from the house and began down the path. The night was silent except for the wind, which howled and battered away at the Ministry safe house they had just evacuated. The Auror's had been questioning one of *his* spies they had just captured when suddenly the Floo had been cut off. All of the Portkeys suddenly malfunctioned and were now useless as the rubbish they had been created out of. The Anti-Apparation Wards, ironically set up by their own Ministry, prevented them from escaping that way. Their only way out was to walk a few metres past the front gate, where the wards would end. Then they could apparate out.

*"Reducto!"* One of the Auror's suddenly screamed loudly, fear and surprise laced throughout his voice, and a flash of crimson light lit the pathway as a burst of magic struck a nearby tree, tearing a large hole in one of the branches with a

loud piercing roar. Wooden splinters rained down to the ground as the branch trembled and toppled to the ground, slamming down noisily.

The front garden was absolutely silent as the echoes of the broken branch washed over the Auror's. The man who had cast the spell glanced widely around, his eyes wide and panicked as he gestured widely towards the tree with his free hand.

"I saw somebody, I swear to Merlin!" He said loudly, his voice crackling with fear.

The Auror's tensed and gripped their wands tighter as the Captain braced himself for combat, adrenaline rushing into his body. His mouth was suddenly dry and sweat beaded on his forehead as his eyes darted around. The spy in the middle of the group suddenly looked hopeful and his lips curved up in a relieved smile.

A loud screech suddenly broke his concentrating as a bird swooped over his head, disappearing into the darkened night, and he sighed.

"Good job!" He snapped angrily. "It was just a dumb fucking bird!"

The Auror blushed, his cheeks flaming up, and looked abashed as several of his colleagues snickered, their laughs breaking the tense silence that had been created, while the spy's face collapsed in misery. Only one Auror didn't laugh, and his face was creased in a wary frown.

"Sir, what type of bird was that?" He asked slowly, his body filling with dread as the tiny suspicions in his mind suddenly whirled together.

"It was probably a fucking owl." The Captain said carelessly, waving off the other Auror in his mirth.

"Sir, I saw it, and it was a hawk." The other Auror replied softly, his wand held high.

The Captain rolled his eyes in annoyance. "Hawk, Owl.... who cares?" He snorted.

"Sir, a hawk is a daytime creature. So what's it doing outside at night?" The Auror answered. The snickers slowly died down as the other Auror's started shifting on their feet.

"It probably got scared when dipshit over there decided to blast it out of its tree." The Captain answered, but his mirth was gone.

"Isn't a hawk the animagus form of...?" The Auror never got to finish his sentence, because at that moment five dark figures leapt from the shadows with their arms

up and blasts of magic erupting from their wands. Streaks of different coloured light burst from their wands as the dark robed attackers leapt at their surprised foe. One Auror screamed as he was struck, the silver light slicing into his chest with a shower of blood, and he fell to the ground as blood pooled from his wound, withering in pain. Another Auror was blasted off his feet as a glittering bolt of orange magic propelled him through the air. He landed painfully on the ground, his head slamming into the stone cobbled pathway. A roaring wave of flames seared through the air, blocking the entrance to the house with a wave of sizzling flames, which flickered widely in the night and cast a bright light over the garden.

*“Astempe!”* One of the more capable Aurors bellowed, and a sphere of bronze coloured magic sparkled around him. A streak of spiralling scarlet magic blasted into the shielded Auror, who staggered but remained upright as the bronze shield flickered as it dispelled the scarlet curse in a burst of showering sparks. Next to the shielded Auror, one of his colleagues fell as an invisible force ploughed into him, snapping his ribs with ease.

*“Bendgrada!”* The Auror Captain shouted, brandishing his wand with skilled ease, and a blast of purple magic burst out towards the nearest dark cloaked figure, which threw themselves to the side and rolled up, their wand levelled towards the Auror Captain, who parried a streak of sparkling crimson magic easily. Sparks flew from both of their wands as they struck at each other, jets and streaks of magic sizzling around them as the Aurors and the invaders fought each other.

*“Astemi!”* The Auror Captain cast, and a globe of golden light formed around him, just as a conjured lump of metal shot towards him, which cracked and snapped upon the force of his shield and fell to the side, clanging horribly on the ground. The opponent waved their wand lazily and the Auror Captain flicked his own wand jerkily, and a wave of flames parted around him.

“Do you have him?” The dark cloaked figure roared over the sounds of fighting, and the Auror Captain blinked at the voice. No...it couldn't be...not *his* second in command! The dull shock that he felt allowed the dark cloaked figure to swipe his wand and his vision flared as a beam of magic rocketed towards him, blinding him by its brilliant light, before he felt himself blown off his feet. He felt a rush of air as he flew through the air, before he slammed into something hard and blacked out.

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Four minutes later, nine Aurors lay unconscious on the ground, some with blood pooling around their bodies and others with scorch marks singed into their royal blue robes. The dark cloaked figures were silent, though one was panting loudly and holding his left arm and the other has several slashes into his robes, blood dripping down onto the ground. The leader of the small force stepped forward, waving his wand at the wall of flames that surrounded the house doors. The flames fell away, revealing a charred and smoking doorway.

"Phillip Trentworthy?" The leader asked.

"Y-Yes?" The pale and shaking figure asked, squinting up from the ground where he had been thrown during the fighting.

"I work for Harry Potter," The cloaked figure said and threw back his hood. A heavily scarred face with ginger hair and brown eyes revealed itself, the face of a well-known terrorist. Ronald Weasley. Phillip gasped, tears springing to his eyes and he clamoured forward with relief on his face, his eyes shining with gratitude.

"I-I knew he wouldn't let me go!" He said widely. "I knew it! I-I'm far too valuable to him!"

"Let's go!" Ron said, brushing away the man's hands. "Harry is creating a distraction at the moment so we can get you out of here without notice. The sooner we leave, the sooner he can leave."

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A scorching beam of light roared in the night, golden light spilling onto the shadows as a man let his magic flow through him, feeding it into his wand. The wall of magic that guarded the thick iron spiked gates in front of him flashed, blue and green wards flickering weakly as they tried to repel the magic. Beyond the wards lay the mansion of Pansy Malfoy; Head of the Disposal of Renegades, whose sole job was to execute anybody who even thought about opposing the Ministry, and by default, the Head of the Ministry, Dark Lord Voldemort of the Isles. Behind the man, a small team of rapid response Ministry Aurors, who were under the control of Voldemort, lay limply on the ground, their wands in broken pieces by their sides.

The man was Harry Potter, who was now aged forty-one. Glasses framed his hardened emerald green eyes and his messy charcoal hair had begun to fleck with grey. His lightning bolt scar lay on his forehead for all to see, and he was dressed in black robes, a hood covering most of his hair and a black cape swirled behind him, seemingly with a life of its own. He was a terrorist, a renegade, a traitor to the Ministry of Magic; a continual thorn in Lord Voldemort's side, an ex-Auror and the Commander of what remained of the Order of Phoenix. Aurors were commanded to kill him on sight and the children of the purebloods were told horror stories where he murdered such famous revolutionaries like Rodolphus Lestrange and Theodore Nott.

As the wards flashed one last time, the golden light tore into them and the gigantic bubble-like dome around the house cracked and splintered, golden light pouring from the wounds, until they crumbled into a wave of falling green and blue shards, which flickered out of existence as they were destroyed. The roaring beam of magic blasted into the gates and the ground shook as they were torn off their hinges and toppled casually to the side.

Harry smiled grimly as he took a step forward, before pausing at the gateway. He waited idly for a minute or so; just to make sure that Pansy had time to call the Auror's while he observed his surroundings. The manor lawns were large and vast and would be no good for fighting on. There was little cover to use and few surrounding aspects of the environment that he might be able exploit. It was better to stay outside for the moment. As he gazed upon the house, he noticed a face peeking out at him from one of the windows in the large manor, twisted up with rage and fear.

"Pansy, is that you?" Harry called loudly, his voice magnified to allow it to boom over the darkened lawns of the manor. "It's me, Harry Potter, remember, we went to the same school!"

The face behind the curtain disappeared and Harry chuckled, shaking his head in amusement. He raised his wand and flicked it with sharp and skilful movements. A humming slither of magic surrounded the tip of his wand, flickering and cackling madly in silver and blue light, before Harry raised his arm and hurled it at the window. A streak of silver and blue magic erupted from his wand with the force of a speeding train, rocketing through the air, only to suddenly crash upon a secondary layer of wards, a dome of bright yellow magic this time.

"I was expecting that," Harry muttered to himself. The manor most likely had a dozen or so different layers of wards, some which would take much longer to crack than the outer wards. But that wasn't his problem at the moment; he was here to be the distraction. One of his spies had been captured yesterday and taken to the closest Ministry building. Harry was here to make sure that the Ministry didn't respond to quickly to the alarms that would have been sent their way.

A loud sprinkling of pops came from behind him and Harry casually turned around, his wand by his side as he observed the new arrivals. Eight Auror's and one masked Death Eater had apparated in, their wands out and levelled at him with well-practised movements.

"The guests of honour have arrived!" Harry said sarcastically as the Auror's spread out around him, their faces set with a determined resignation and barely masked fear. Harry took note of the Death Eater and he narrowed his eyes. "Death Eater, take off your mask!"

The Death Eater automatically flung her mask aside under Harry's piercing stare, revealing a young witch with pretty blue eyes, dark blonde hair and face that seemed to be permanently twisted into a sneer. Hatred flowed through her eyes as she regarded Harry with contempt and scorn.

"Ah, you're a new Death Eater," Harry mused, slowly pacing inside the small circle of Auror's. "You know, there were times where Death Eaters were nothing

more than lapdogs, brutish men and women who displayed a skill in torturing others. Of course, this was before the Ministry fell and they became the top-ranked Auror's."

"Shut up!" The woman growled angrily, her eyes blazing with fury. Harry cocked an eyebrow and frowned.

"That's very rude of you," He said. He made a show of raising his wand and sighed dramatically. "But you did come here to fight, and all I am doing is talking, so..." and with a single flick, he swept four Auror's off their feets with considerable ease, magic pulsing through the air. He spun around with a sweep of his cloak, his wand trailing to his side and before the three other Auror's had even uttered the first syllable of their curses, Harry had slammed one Auror into the ruined gates and sent another to the ground with two broken legs, while sending the final Auror flying through the air.

"You know, back in my days we had real Auror's," Harry said, his voice full of derision as he regarded the downed Auror's. "These days it looks like that if you can torture something, then you're in. It's no wonder why you haven't been able to destroy the Order yet. It's only been, what, seventeen years?"

"*Refgra!*" The Death Eater shrieked, her voice panicked and full of hatred at the same time. Harry gracefully dodged the cackling grey bone-breaker, letting it fly past his shoulder, and brought his wand up as the Death Eater stepped back, her wand rapidly flicking through the air. "*Obliverto! Antere! Croitoso!*"

Harry swiped his wand downward, leaving a shimmering wave of sparkling pure white magic that spread out to form a solid wall of glistening glowing particles in front of him. The powerful destruction spell burst from the Death Eater's wand and struck the gleaming ashen wall, exploding in a shower of dark purple specks as powerful invisible blows rained down upon the shield, while the swift murky orange curse sliced into the wall and shimmered from existence.

"Trying to cut off my head?" Harry peered over his shield and allowed a small grin to twitch his lips. "Like I said, it's awfully rude."

The Death Eater wasn't done yet as she jumped forward, bellowing an incantation that produced a golden spear-like curse, which rotated as it slammed into Harry's shield. The shield cracked but held as the magical spear exploded violently upon it. Flames jutted out, charring stone and searing grass, while the Death Eater sidestepped, clearly expecting a counterattack. None came.

"I can see why they made you a Death Eater," Harry said as he dispelled his cracked glowing pale shield. "You actually have skill, unlike the rest of these Auror's. That's also another thing that's different about Death Eater's these days.

Before, most of them were just thugs. You'd be surprised about how easy it was to kill some... ”

The Death Eater darted forward with a screech of anger, her wand swiping through the air. “*Crucio!*” She screamed in rage. A crimson flash of magic burst from her wand as Harry quickly jumped out of the way, and it struck one of the stone columns that had surrounded the gate and blasted a small chunk from it. Harry moved forward quickly, no longer mocking the Death Eater, who thrust her wand out again.

“*Avada Kedavra!*” She cried out. From her wand came a jet of green light, a green that was unique in its very colour. Death radiated off the streak of magic and there was a sound of roaring wind that filled Harry’s ears as he threw himself to the ground, landing on his stomach with his wand outstretched, aimed for the Death Eater in front of him. As the Killing Curse soared over his shoulder, Harry gave a short flick of his wand, and an arc of glinting silver burst from his wand. The Death Eater summoned a shield to surround her, but the arc ripped through it and dove into her stomach. She screamed in agony as it tore into her, ripping away at her from the inside, and fell to the ground, withering and moaning in pain. Her wand fell from her shaking and useless fingers as pain throbbed to her brain in continuous waves.

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Harry picked himself up from the ground and brushed off the dirt of his robes. He ran his eyes over the other Aurors, all who were still lying limply on the ground and summoned their wands so that they hovered in front of him. With a deft flick of his wand, they splintered and snapped into several pieces, before falling to the ground. Harry then turned to the Death Eater on the ground and approached her, his eyes showing no sympathy for her whatsoever.

“You really seemed to have a personal grudge against me,” He said softly, kneeling down by her side.

“M-MY name is A-Avery,” The woman choked out through a mouthful of blood. Even in her death throes, the woman was able to muster hatred into her voice. “M-My father was k-killed in the s-second war...you killed him when I w-was two!”

Harry frowned and stood up. He gazed at the woman thoughtfully, before smiling coldly. “Be thankful that I did kill him. Your father had a tendency to use the Imperius on little girls. I’m sure that you wouldn’t have been spared his...love.”

“F-Fuck you!” The woman said weakly. She shuddered painfully and closed her eyes, a tear falling down her cheek.

“I’d rather you didn’t,” Harry said dryly. He levelled his wand at her. “But I don’t think you’ll ever get a chance to now.”

Suddenly the air was full of the cracks of apparition as more Ministry Auror's arrived in the dozens, accompanied by the elite white-masked Death Eaters. Harry instantly raised his wand and lashed out with his magic no sooner than a second after they had arrived. The very air vibrated with the power of the spell that he cast as a blinding ray of light burst from his wand, scorching the first ranks of the Aurors, who fell with their hands clutching their eyes as they screamed in pain. The blinding flash subsided after four or five seconds, leaving eleven or twelve blinded Auror's snivelling on the ground.

"Potter!" One of the masked Death Eaters hissed, raising a hand to halt the Aurors. "I should have expected to see your pathetic hide here!"

"Draco Malfoy," Harry answered calmly. He ignored the other twenty or so Auror's and four Death Eaters and instead focussed on the platinum haired man. "I'm sorry, was this a bad time to arrive to knock on the door?"

"You won't get out of this alive," Malfoy said, his face flushed with rage as he surveyed the ruins of his gates. "We surround you and outnumber you, and no matter your talents, you simply cannot win. My wife is safe now that I'm here because I won't let you harm her!"

"Malfoy, if I was here to actually to kill precious little Pansy, she would be dead right now," Harry said in amusement. He surveyed the large force that was about to be pitted against him. "This is an awful lot of people, especially for night shift. There has to be...what, every Auror available at the moment? Right?"

Malfoy sneered but nodded.

"Well, would you like to know why I'm here?" Harry asked suddenly. "You see Malfoy, I had no interest in your wife. You...maybe, but I wouldn't waste my efforts in trying to bring down some complex wards for that pug-faced slut you call a spouse." He lifted up a small sparkling crystal that was pulsing a soft white light. "Do you see this Malfoy? This is telling me that the mission is complete. You see, while you dragged the entire Auror department down here, my people were rescuing Phillip Trentworthy from your supposed secret safe house."

"No...!" Malfoy whispered in shock. "It took us two years to catch that traitor!"

"Have fun explaining this to your boss!" Harry said with a smirk. "Some professional advice Malfoy, next time don't gloat and actually try to kill me!"

Malfoy opened his mouth as Harry smashed the crystal down onto the ground, and as jets of green light burst from the four Death Eater wands, Harry disappeared in a swirl of mist and pulsing light.

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"W-Where are we?" Phillip asked Ron tentatively, who ignored the man as they waited. The pair was on a foggy pier, with crumbling wooden boats rotting away in the seawater next to them. The sea was calm and flat and licked the rocks that lined the shoreline softly and a seagull gave a mournful cry as it flew overhead and into the fog obscured ocean air. The temperature was cold and while Ron didn't seem to notice it, Phillip did and he was shivering violently before somebody appeared with a soft apparition crack.

"Good evening Harry," Ron greeted, a small smile on his face.

"It's morning by now," Harry said as the small ocean breeze ruffling his hood and cloak. His piercing green eyes swung to Phillip, who made a strangled noise somewhere between awe and fear. "Phillip Trentworthy, our former spy. You were lucky we found you."

"I'll never make you regret this sir!" Phillip exclaimed, dropping to his knees. "I'll do whatever you want for rescuing me from...*them!*"

"Get up," Harry said, a note of scorn in his voice and Phillip hastily jumped to his feet, shivering violently.

"Um...Sir? Where are we?" He asked, his teeth beginning to chatter.

Harry turned to him, a dark smile on his face. "We're in the only secure fortress left in Britain."

Phillip winced as dawning horror appeared on his face. "We're in...?" He trailed off.

"Welcome to Azkaban Phillip."

## CHAPTER TWO

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Phillip followed Harry Potter and Ronald Weasley as they left the fog-ridden docks, shivering violently. It was very dark and the billowing dark grey clouds blocked out the moon and stars, leaving the small ball of fire resting in Harry Potter's hands as the only light source. Phillips teeth chattered and he gave a start of surprise as his feet left wooden planks and emerged on stone, glancing around him apprehensively and trying to pierce the shroud of fog that had been swept over the island. The further Phillip walked, the thicker the fog became, until it there was nothing else but fog.

"W-Why are we here?" Phillip asked nervously, stuttering slightly. Ronald Weasley scowled but Harry Potter smiled thinly, his green eyes glinting in dark amusement.

"This is the most secure base we have," He said casually, never breaking a step, as Peter had to jog to keep up with his fast stride. "Where did you think we were going?"

"M-Maybe out of the country?" Phillip tried hesitantly.

"Most Wizarding countries have extradition treaties with Voldemort," Harry replied grimly. "If you were caught by their law enforcement, you would just be sent back to Britain."

"Voldemort invaded this place four times, once to back in 1995, again seven years later just after the Fall of the Ministry, and twice afterwards as he tried to get rid of the remnants of the Order of Phoenix. He succeeded only once, when he freed his prisoners in '95. This island is very well protected and you'll be safe here, safer than anywhere else in the world," Ron tried to reassure Phillip.

"S-Safe?" Phillip asked hollowly. "I though there were Death Eater's still on the island?"

Ron gave a snort of amusement, his eyes cold. "When the Ministry fell, the Order of Phoenix took refuge in the old Auror barracks in the Fortress of Azkaban. We interrogated all of the prisoners and released the ones who we felt were safe, thieves and that. The Death Eaters were summarily executed and the murderers and rapists and that lot were fed to the Dementors."

"Dementors?" Phillip exclaimed, horror flooding into his features. The fog pushed in on him and he shivered, drawing his ratty cloak around himself. "I won't go near Dementors!"

"The Dementors are gone now." Harry said curtly, peering through the fog as if he could see past it. "It's just us."

"Where did they go?" Phillip asked apprehensively though with some relief though.

"America," He answered honestly. "We had confined them to the inner recesses of the Fortress and one day, an inspection team discovered that they were gone. For a few days we thought that they had somehow escaped into the muggle cities, but there was no trace of them anywhere in Britain. We found that they had joined their kin in the United States. They probably thought they weren't going to get fed anymore."

"How could they disappear?" Phillip asked in confusion. "I thought this place was impenetrable."

"It is," Harry said firmly and coldly, and gave a piercing frown at Phillip, who shivered again, which had nothing to do with the fog and cold. He suddenly peered straight ahead and stopped. "We're here."

Phillip frowned, trying to see past the murky fog, before he gave a start as the ball of silver flickering flames disappeared from Harry's hands as the darkness swallowed his vision. He gulped nervously, his mouth strangely dry in the damp air as he waited. He could hear the rustle of robes next to him as Ron shifted on his feet, before a twinkling light emerged from the fog in front of him.

"What's that?" Phillip asked, but he received no reply from either of the other men. He frowned as the light continued twinkling and blinking, before there was a sudden rush of cold biting wind. Phillip huddled his shoulders in together, fear pounding through his veins as the wind continued to roar around him. For a moment, his panic-stricken mind conjured fantasies of giant dragons or dark beasts that hid in the fog, waiting to devour any human foolish enough to come close. He wondered briefly if he should have stayed with the Aurors, before he let out a loud gasp. Curtains of fog flowed away from the group, the biting icy winds blowing the billowy murkiness away, revealing the Fortress of Azkaban. Large stone-block walls jutted from the ground, thick and high. They were dull grey and loomed ominously above Phillip, who shrunk back as the fog parted and revealed more walls. Two spiked towers loomed above the walls, and he could see faint light from them. In front of him lay a large gate, iron studs running down the sides. They were completely black, sinister and threatening, and suited the walls very well.

"Merlin!" Phillip exclaimed softly, his eyes wide. He suddenly gave a squeak of fright as the doors creaked loudly, before they parted. Fog whooshed past them as they opened and hid whatever lay beyond in a black disturbing shroud of darkness.

"Let's go, and stay on the path." Harry ordered quietly and Phillip hesitated as both Harry and Ron began to walk forward. He squirmed as he stood beneath the vast walls of Azkaban, before hurrying forward to catch up.

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Past the ominous gates lay a single pathway made of cobbled and cracked grey stone. The fog lingered around as the gates began closing, screeching away in the dead of the night, but blazing torches burnt on the fractured walls on either side of the path. As Phillip's eyes adjusted to the gloom, he frowned as he saw stones poking up from the dead earth that surrounded the cobble path. Rusted iron pikes stood around them and grass struggled to poke through the dusty and rocky solid, leaving only a few dying clumps every now and then. Phillip continued walking down the path, trailing after Harry and Ron, his shoes clapping loudly on the path, until his curiosity got the better of him. Phillip knew that he recognised the stones from somewhere and he stepped off the path, squinting as he approached one of them. As he got closer, moving through the slight shroud of fog, Phillip finally recognised what the upright stones signified and shuddered in terror. They were gravestones, uniform rows of them. There were no inscriptions, no flowers, no sign that anybody ever visited the dirt covered aging tombs and he hastily stepped backwards, before he bumped into something behind him something that moved. He spun around and screamed loudly, piercing the eerie silence of the graveyard.

A corpse stood in front of him, an Inferius. It wore dirt-covered robes, ripped and bloodied beyond recognition, revealing cold grey dead flesh underneath. Its eyes were blank white, the pupils and iris missing and its mouth was open, baring splintered teeth, jagged and crusted over with sickly green filth. One of its arms was hanging on by a patch of skin and it flayed uselessly as the Inferius raised its good arm, broken fingernails bared as it curved its hand as it approached Phillip, who stood rooted to the spot.

"*Accio!*" Somebody yelled, and Phillip felt a magic surround his body, foreign to his own. For a second his magic thrashed out at the unwelcome magic, instinctively fighting off the invading coils of invisible magic that tugged at him. It was the single reason why summoning people was a hard thing to do as if it was unwelcome, the users own magic slashed open he spell, but at the moment, Phillip took one last look at the Inferius and forcefully lowered his guard, allowing himself to be pulled away from the animated corpse. He soared through the air through fog and mist, the biting wind slicing into his ears and face. He was numb in the face after two seconds as he roughly landed on the stone path, grimacing as he thumped down unceremoniously.

"I distinctly remember telling you to stay on the path," Harry said coldly, his green gaze boring into Phillips eyes while Ron tucked his wand away, glancing at Phillip with a slightly sympathetic gaze.

"Inferius?" He asked gruffly.

Phillip nodded hastily, his head bobbing up and down as he staggered to his feet, his nostrils flaring as he breathed in hard. His heart was still pumping furiously and adrenaline itched in his veins. He wanted to run away, be anywhere else but this place, but one look at Harry Potter's hard face and he resisted the temptation, instead drawing closer to Ron.

"I think you've upset them," Harry said, sweeping the tombstones with his eyes. Dark human-shaped figures stirred beneath the rolling waves of fog, moving slowly towards the path in lurching steps. They shuffled along the dirt, oblivious to anything else except Phillip. Harry raised his wand and aimed it at the side of the path. A small splatter of flames burst from it, splashing along the grooves in the path that separated the dirt from the stone, and suddenly heat seared through the air as a wall of yellow and orange flames burst from the ground. Harry repeated the procedure on the other side of the path and another wall of flames burst from the ground, zooming up and down the path until the graveyard was invisible, blocked by fiery hedges. Strangely, the heat died down after a few seconds, leaving only a warm haze that pushed away the fog and lit the stone path with a gentle glow.

"Why do you have Inferius here?" Phillip had to ask, the question was itching to come out.

"They are psychological weapons," Harry answered softly, glancing up and down the wall of flames until he was satisfied. He turned his gaze to Phillip, and a twisted smile appeared on his face. "If Death Eaters and Aurors ever invade this island, they'll have to come down this path. The inferius include some Death Eaters that we found when we captured Azkaban and others that I killed beforehand. Some of them were quite famous back then and are still famous today. Rodolphus Lestrange, Rabastan Lestrange, Theodore Nott and Daphne Greengrass...these people are considered heroes who died under the 'evil wand of the traitor, Harry Potter'. There mere sight of their corpses would be a terrible emotional counterattack for any invaders, and I doubt that anybody would want to turn a wand upon them."

"That's horrible," Phillip whispered nauseously.

"You're right," Ron spoke up. "But if it gives our families and friends five more minutes to evacuate and escape, then I don't particularly care, and neither does Harry."

Phillip nodded slowly, and turned his head as Harry gestured towards the end of the path to a smaller set of doors, where the flames ended.

"This way," He said and strode briskly away, his cloak flapping behind him in an unseen wind.

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When Phillip entered the door, he stepped into a moderately large rectangular foyer. Immediately he was assaulted with a wave of warmth and sighed blissfully as the heat throbbed into him, warming his numbed body. He rubbed his hands, breathing in deeply, before he took a look at the room. The walls were made from the same grey stone that Phillip had seen on the island and it was cracked and rough. Thick stone columns held up the roof, aged but sturdy, and flickering torches rested on them, casting a warm glow over the room. There were six columns on either side of the room and in between them rested giant statues of brass men, twice the size of a normal man. They were all armoured and each held two swords behind their backs. There was a single door at the end of the room, where two men with grim faces stood motionless, their wands out and their eyes alert and ready. Several other men and women lounged about in chairs around the door, cards and chips scattered around the table, but they jumped to their feet when Harry, Ron and Phillip entered the room, their wands flying into their hands in movements far too quick to be seen. Foe detectors and sneakoscopes and various other dark detectors littered the shelves around the table.

"Who goes there?" One man called out roughly. His was dressed in scruffy and worn battle robes, battered dragonhide gleaming dully in the torchlight but he held the air of a professional soldier.

"Ronald Weasley, Harry Potter and Phillip Trentworthy." Ron called out loudly, his voice echoing throughout the suddenly silent room.

The wizard nodded, clearly expecting them, and motioned them forward while his colleagues took up positions around the door, their wands levelled at the small party.

"Come on," Ron muttered to Phillip.

The three-man group moved forward, their footsteps echoing loudly in the quiet room, as they approached the guards. Phillip suddenly felt apprehensive at the sight of the stern guards and looked around at one of the nearby statues.

"They're nice," He said plainly as he gestured to one of the statues.

"They're part of our defence system," Harry remarked as he walked. "I got the idea from my fifth year at Hogwarts, when I saw an animated bronze statue get struck by a Killing Curse with little damage. If the enemy ever breaches this hall, they will activate and deal with them."

"Have you ever used them?" Phillip asked while he was glancing at the massive statues.

Harry smiled darkly. "Only once," He replied and said no more as the group approached the guard, stopping a few metres away.

"Remove your wands and place them on the table by your side," The man barked loudly. Phillip flinched but Ron and Harry calmly removed their wands and set them on the table smoothly, a well-practised motion. Phillip fumbled for his and hurriedly dropped it next to the others.

"Davidson, Edgar," The man called, and two of his colleagues approached from the circle of wizards and witches that surrounded them. He turned to Harry and let off a smart salute. "Sir, you have to participate in three different tasks if you want to pass."

"I'm well ware of that, since I did design these procedures myself." Harry said, a note of amusement creeping into his voice. The man looked abashed but Harry chuckled slightly and motioned him forward.

"Um...procedures?" Phillip asked in confusion, eyeing the approaching man cautiously.

"You'll be subjected to a truth serum so that you can prove who your truly are, as well as a Legilimency scan," Ron answered.

"What are the normal procedures?" Phillip asked.

"Truth Serum and Legilimency, random questions that only my true self would know and a shield test," Ron replied, his eyes locked onto the man in front of him as his mind was carefully examined, gently probing his true identity.

"Shield test?"

"That was my idea," Harry said, his own eyes locked on the person in front of him. "We are all taught some very simple shields, six in total. They are worthless in battle and are only capable of deflecting specific spells that I have designed, variations of the Stunning Spell. You will be told what spell will be used against you and you have to conjure the appropriate counter-shield. The shield will only deflect its opposite variant; if you conjure the wrong shield then you are stunned and taken to a cell until we have determined whether you accidentally chose the wrong spell or you are trying to infiltrate Azkaban."

"That's...brilliant," Phillip conceded.

“Jefferson, after Phillip has passed his tests, escort him to an empty room. Make sure he sees Luna for a medical scan.” Harry ordered and the man in front of him snapped a salute. He grimaced as a small vial of clear liquid was brought forward. “Make sure you stick to the questions,” He ordered and opened his mouth. He felt numbness spread from his tongue and through his body, relaxing the taut muscles and casting a dreamy sensation over his brain.

“What is your name?” ... *What is your name? What is your name? What is your name?*

Harry shivered as the question boomed in his skull, hounding into his ears and writing the very question onto his brain. “Harry Potter,” He replied blankly and sighed in relief as the increasing pressure in his head dropped away.

“Are you affiliated with Voldemort, or the Dark Lord, or the Ministry, or the Death Eaters and any organization that opposes the Order of Phoenix?”

“No,” Harry replied quickly, his tongue moving involuntarily.

Harry stood there, his eyes not seeing anything, before his head was tipped back and three drops of something cool slid down his throat. The building pressure in his skull subsided and he shook his head groggily, shaking away the effects of Veritaserum.

“Sir, I am about to perform the fifth variation jinx,” The man said, talking a few steps backwards and levelled his wand at Harry.

Harry nodded and from his robes came his wand, which floated into his hand. He noticed Phillip being led off through the door as the man swished his wand.

“*Quentistupefy!*” The man muttered and a flash of purple light rocketed from the tip of his wand, shooting towards Harry.

“*Quatraprotego!*” Harry called loudly and firmly. A flimsy looking purple dome of magic surrounded him, shimmering weakly, and the purple jinx burst into a shower of harmless sparks as impacted onto it. Both the shield and the jinx faded away as Harry pocketed his wand calmly.

“Sir, I just have to ask you a couple of questions and then you’re free to go.” The man said. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see the other Auror send a streak of glowing yellow magic at Ron, who responded with a flimsy shield of his own, the same colour as the jinx.

“What are they?” Harry asked.



"What's your ID number sir?" The man questioned, looking on a small notebook he held in his hands.

"I don't have an ID number," Harry answered, a small smile appearing on his face at the sheer simplicity of the question.

"What's the fastest thing you rode on during your third year at Hogwarts?" The man questioned again.

"Buckbeak," Harry answered easily.

"What's your least favourite sport?"

"Hunting," Harry said, or more specifically, Harry Hunting.

"Sir, you're free to enter." The man said, lowering his wand and signalling to his companions to lower theirs. He snapped off a crisp salute and finally broke the emotionless mask he had been wearing. "How was Malfoy Manor sir?"

"It was a lot smaller than I thought it would be," Harry admitted, and the man gave a chuckle. He turned to Ron and gave a slight wave as he stepped through the door. "I'll see you tomorrow Ron."

"Later Harry," Ron called, before turning back to the guard in front of me, who had produced a notebook from his robes.

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Harry stepped into a large office and closed the door. Rubbing the bridge of his nose, he walked forward and dropped into a very cushy armchair, sighing as he sank into the various cushioning charms. A fireplace flickered softly in the wall while candles hovered in the air with an infinite supply of wax and wick. His desk made of sturdy oak had several scrolls of parchment on it. When Harry caught sight of them, he groaned out loud and flicked his hand. The scrolls zoomed from his desk and flew into his lap. Harry unrolled one and studied them carefully.

"What are they?" A dark-haired woman with brown eyes and emerald green robes asked. Her name was Christina. She was only twenty years old and had been a Muggleborn that Harry had rescued over a decade ago. She had completed the Azkaban Magical Courses and had applied to be Harry's assistant. Harry was all too happy to take her on board as it lightened his workload considerably. She was one of the few people that Harry trusted implicitly because she had signed several powerful magical contracts and taken very powerful magical oaths to ensure her loyalty.

"This one is a requisition form for some wands for the new Muggleborns we rescued a month ago," Harry answered, gesturing for her to enter the room.

"How many do we need?" Christina asked as she sat down in the seat opposite Harry.

"About twenty," Harry said with a grimace. "We may need to raid a Wandmaker's shop to get good matches."

"What about getting them from Australia? They had turned a blind eye when the secondary relocation camps were created in their desert." Christina proposed. Harry frowned but shook his head.

"Technically, Australia is cooperating with the Ministry of Magic. They might not mind a few training and civilian camps in the deserts but they'll be concerned about what would happen to them if Voldemort found out they were aiding us with wands." Harry replied. He scribbled something down on the parchment and then bundled it up into a scroll and handed it to Christina. "Give this to Ron, low priority."

Christina nodded in understanding as she took at the scroll while Harry skimmed over another one. His eyes darkened in anger as he read on.

"Who's that one from?" Christina asked, noticing her boss' angry expression.

"This one is a report sent by one of my spies within the Improper Use of Magic Office," Harry said darkly. Although Phillip may not have known, he was not the only spy that Harry had working inside the Ministry. This spy was an essential source of information when it was in relation to Muggleborns. Anytime accidental magic occurred within Britain that was not within the location of the standard Pureblood estates, Harry knew about it. Whenever a Muggleborn was arrested, Harry knew about it.

"What's it about?"

"It's a warning," Harry answered flatly. "Bellatrix Lestrange is planning to initiate several new Death Eater's and intends to celebrate in Morsmordre." Voldemort had always hated the fact that Azkaban remained out of his control and had built his own prison island temporarily, until he could conquer Azkaban. He named it Morsmordre, intending it to be his new '*mark*' to instigate fear into the masses and keep them under control.

"Celebrate?" Christina asked slowly.

"It's a polite way of saying torture," Harry replied. "It will probably be with the imprisoned Muggleborns that the Ministry snatched up before we got to them."

"Merlin! They're just children!" Christina gasped, her hands flying to her mouth in shock.

"When has that ever stopped them?" Harry muttered. "Voldemort must be getting more and more confident in his power. Usually the Ministry just exiles the Muggleborns to keep the other international Wizarding communities happy. People tend to disapprove of genocide and Voldemort's smart enough to know that he doesn't want to start a war before he's ready for it."

"Do you think he's ready now?" Christina asked.

"He'll want to crush Azkaban before he starts any international campaigns." Harry disagreed. "Besides, he has time."

Long ago, Harry had set out on a quest to destroy Voldemort's Horcruxes. He had found two of them and destroyed them; the Cup of Hufflepuff and curiously enough, the Foe Glass of Gryffindor, before he had recruited himself into the Auror Department to stop the waves of attacks against the Ministry. Four years later, the Ministry had fallen and Harry had fled to the last Ministry stronghold and took command of the remnants of the Order of Phoenix.

"What are you going to do?" Christina asked hesitantly.

"Send messages to the Council members," Harry ordered as he threw the report into the fireplace. Harry and only Harry knew of every single spy that the Order employed in the Ministry and he firmly intended to keep it that way. "There will be a meeting tomorrow. That will be all."

Christina nodded and stood. "Goodnight Commander," She said softly, before leaving Harry alone in his office.

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Harry stared at the report blazing in the fireplace before standing up, yawning softly. He walked across the room and opened a door, which led to his bedroom. The bedroom had been painted into a deep scarlet. There was a large four-poster at the end of the room, two flickering fireplaces on one wall; several bookcases full to the brim with magical tomes on the other wall and a small set of wall-units alongside the door.

Harry flicked his wand casually and magic pulsed in the room as several layers of proximity and security wards activated. His door slammed shut and shimmered, before morphing into a single solid bar of steel. He sighed and undressed himself; then he ripped open the covers to his bed and crawled in. He placed his wand under his pillow and tried to get some sleep. Tomorrow would be a busy day.

## Chapter Three

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The sun slowly peeked over the horizon and the ocean glittered beautifully as light first struck the island fortress of Azkaban. Mist and fog was swept away under the warm breezes that accompanied the sunrise and seagulls cried out as they woke from their sleep, eager for their breakfast meal. On the top floor of Azkaban Fortress, Harry Potter stared out of the window, idly watching two birds fight over a small fish, their war cries echoing around the stonewalls of the former prison. Behind him lay a long elaborately carved table made of thick oak. Seated around the table was the Council of the Order of Phoenix. Harry turned around and gave a brief smile to his friends as he walked away from the window and took the comfortable armchair at the head of the table.

“Good morning everybody,” Harry greeted, his eyes flicking over his friends faces.

On his right sat Ronald Weasley, the Head of the Military Affairs. He had changed a lot from his Hogwarts days. His face had been heavily battered during the fights against the Death Eaters and large scars had been ripped into his cheeks and chin. A large portion of his ear was missing and his brown eyes, which had once been bright and optimistic, were reserved and hard. His ginger hair was scattered with grey and his face was beginning to show the faint signs of wrinkles, which was an uncommon thing to happen to a wizard considered to be entering his prime. Ron had once been an Auror, much like Harry, and was feared throughout Britain as being a Harry’s second in command.

On Harry’s left sat Ginny Weasley. Like her brother, Ginny had also once been an Auror. However, when Voldemort had invaded the Ministry, Ginny had been wounded horribly and was maimed for life. Her left arm had been completely blown off and had been replaced with a magical prosthetic, which allowed her to perform tasks with both hands. She walked with a terrible limp using a cane. Her face still had a scattering of freckles but a large burn covered her left cheek and she had been blinded in one of her eyes. Despite her injuries, she was considered to be the resident expert in potion making and spent most of her days using the limited supplies to create Healing Potions, Skele-Grow and various other potions that were useful to the Order.

Sitting next to Ron was Hermione Weasley, wife to Ron for twenty-seven years. Hermione was not physically crippled in any visible way, her face bore no scars, her hair was still bushy and thick, her cinnamon eyes still sparkled for knowledge, but she carried something that to her, was much worse than any disfigurement. Fifteen years ago, Hermione had been struck in the abdomen with a very nasty ripping curse, which has sliced into her internal organs. While the Healer’s had been able to save her life, they were unable to repair all of the damage. Hermione had been six weeks pregnant at the time and the spell not only killed

the unborn child but also crippled her ability to have more children. She would never have any more children. Her only daughter, Audi Weasley, was considered a blessing. Hermione was Head of Educational Affairs and spent most of her days teaching with the gentle affection she would have dearly bestowed on her second child.

Sitting next to Ginny was Luna Lovegood, who was Chief Healer of the Azkaban Medical Wing. Her long blonde hair was woven in an intricate mixture of braids and tresses and her blue eyes stared languorously into the distance, entering a world that was far away from the pain and injustice of her own. Luna was not married and was responsible for all medical matters of Azkaban.

On Luna's left, Neville Longbottom lounged in his seat. The once plump boy had physically remained quite similar with a large figure and a healthy tan. His eyes shone with gentle warmth and his hands were calloused and dirty. He wore old shabby robes with flaky mud in spread about in various patches. Neville was Head of Agricultural Matters, a department that was solely responsible for the food supply of every single person that lived on the island. There were two large greenhouses on the back of the island that had been magically expanded to double their size. Inside these greenhouses, corn and wheat and various other plants were magically grown within a week, harvested and distributed amongst the population. Neville was also responsible for the fishing production and on average, hauled in half a ton of fish every week. Fish, vegetables and fruit was pretty much all there was to eat on Azkaban.

"First, weekly reports everybody," Harry said and clasped his hands together as Ron cleared his throat gruffly, shuffling a several pieces of parchment in front of him. He glanced down for a few seconds before addressing the entire room.

"Right now, the Order of Phoenix has One hundred and eleven capable fighters," He said. "Eighty six of these fighters have been allocated to the DAI, Defence of Azkaban Island, while twenty five have been allocated the five five-man raiding parties. I've introduced a new training regime to increase the standard of proficiency and improve duelling skills. At the moment, there is one raiding party out of Azkaban...causing some trouble down in Essex on a Ministry Warehouse...just standard intimidation work."

"Thankyou Ron," Harry said as Ron sat down and his wife, Hermione stood up.

"At the present moment, Azkaban holds fifty three Muggleborn students below the age of seventeen. Nine of these students are only starting to enter the first stages of their education. There are currently four of them qualified Professor's instructing them in various fields, but focussing on Defence Against the Dark Arts, Charms and Transfiguration. I expect that in a month, eleven students will have...graduated. Of these eleven, three have expressed an interest in joining the DAI; two are interested in the agriculture department, one is seeking to

become Ginny's Apprentice and five want to leave Azkaban to be with their families in whatever country we relocated them to." Hermione lectured, seemingly without taking a breath. Harry stared at her with amusement and she flushed slightly as she sat down.

"We..." Ginny started, as she stood up, her voice raspy and weak, before breaking off into a cough. Reaching into her dark robes, she pulled out a small vial of orange potion and popped open the top, downing it all in one go. She shook her head and tucked the empty vial back into her robes before continuing again. "We have a fairly decent supply of the general Healing potions. We only have seven advanced Healing Potions but I can have another four done by the end of the week. Our Polyjuice is running low as is our Veritaserum, but I started a batch two weeks ago and expect it to be finished soon. There is still a tiny amount of Felix Felicis left, but some of the Raiders are beginning to show the side effects. Some of them are having trouble what is humanly possible and what is not."

"Discontinue the use of Felix Felicis on anybody who has had more than three doses of it," Harry ordered. "And flush the systems of those who are experiencing the side effects. We don't need a Raider to suddenly decide that they would be able to take on Voldemort and getting themselves captured."

Ginny nodded and sat back down.

"Our hospital is clean," Luna said and smiled inanely at Harry, who nodded his head solemnly.

"That's good to know Luna," He said. "Anything else?"

Luna paused and looked thoughtful, her eyes peering upwards as if she was reading the back of her brain. "That's all," She finally said. "My hospital is clean,"

"Neville?" Harry asked the suntanned man, who was smiling at Luna's larking about.

"The current population of Azkaban Island is two hundred and twenty three...two hundred and twenty four if we include the new arrival, a Phillip Trentworthy. So far we've been able to grow enough food to keep everybody happy and supply our warehouses with enough food to last a month. We're good in grain, but our fishing is getting poor results. When are we shifting the island?" Neville asked.

"In about a week or so," Harry answered.

Neville nodded, satisfied. "Let's just hope we pick a good fishing supply this time," He said and sat back down.

"This meeting has been called because I've just received a report from a trustworthy source that indicates that Bellatrix will be amusing her Death Eater's at Morsmordre in two days time. The main entertainment will be the imprisoned Muggleborns." Harry said seriously, his emerald eyes darkening in anger. "This is something that I would prefer to prevent."

"We're going to attack Morsmordre?" Ron asked, frowning heavily as he considered the options. "It's a very well-defended complex, we could need at all of the Raiders for this. Even then it might not be enough"

"Only two teams will be going," Harry replied, leaning back in his chair. "I can't risk all of our competent fighters on one attack."

"Two teams?" Ron asked in disbelief. "Harry, with two teams I can guarantee that there will be casualties."

"With five teams, I can guarantee that there will be a hell of a lot more casualties," Harry said calmly. "Like you said, the complex is well-defended and I don't think we would be able to break into it."

"So what are we going to do?" Neville asked, frowning in puzzlement.

Harry lips curved into a smile and as he opened his mouth, the large set of double-doors opened at the end and a DAI guard dressed in a well-polished ebony dragonhide jacket entered, escorting Phillip Trentworthy, whose hands were shaking.

"Ah Phillip!" Harry called out joyously, a smile suddenly appearing on his serious face. "Come and join us!"

Phillip looked apprehensive and turned to glance at the doors behind him longingly, before the guard walked out and they slammed shut with a resounding bang. He gulped and slowly walked forward, taking the only available seat next to Hermione, who smiled nicely at him.

"Phillip, we were just talking about Morsmordre," Harry explained to the ratty-looking man with a smile on his face. "I believe you used to be a guard there."

"Yeah, that was where I worked, for both the Ministry and you, until I was captured." Phillip answered nervously.

"Phillip," Harry's smile disappeared and he leaned forward, his palms flat on the table. "I have just received some horrible news by an associate of mine. Bellatrix Lestrange is planning on murdering the Muggleborn children housed in Morsmordre."

"That is horrible news," Phillip agreed, his voice tinged with disgust.

"Ron and I were just discussing an attack plan, but we both know that it would be useless to attack the prison outright. It's well too guarded and defended." Harry said gravely.

Phillip nodded in agreement before he caught the speculative look Ron was giving him and it dawned onto him and he jumped from his seat, wringing his hands.

"Oh no!" He cried out. "I'm not going back to that place again!"

"Phillip, we don't want you to." Harry said relaxingly, standing up and walking around the table to stand next to him. He laid a comforting hand on Phillips back and rubbed it soothingly as he continued to talk in a calm and reasonable tone. "If you could just work with us for a few hours today, then we would be able to use your information to infiltrate the prison complex without so much as a shouted curse."

"You just want information?" Phillip asked in a small voice, looking dreadfully afraid. "But what if I get it wrong? Merlin, I could lead people to their deaths!"

Harry smiled comfortingly. "That's why I want your permission to allow Luna here, our expert in medical matters, to extract the memories from you. We will be able to study them ourselves and decide what to do without the chance that you may be wrong."

Phillip looked at Luna, who smiled serenely at Phillip and looked so innocent that he couldn't help but relax. "W-Will it hurt?" He asked softly, cringing at the thought of pain.

Harry's face turned sympathetic and he nodded. "I'm afraid so. If we want reliable information, we need it to be as accurate as possible. The slightest detail might be the difference between life and death. Don't worry; Luna will be able to give you a sedative that can block most of the pain."

Phillip sighed, looking forlorn, but nodded his head slowly. Harry smiled gratefully at the man and turned to Luna.

"Luna, could you please lead Phillip to the finest hospital bed in Azkaban and give him the strongest sedative we have available?" He asked politely.

Luna smiled softly and stood. She placed a pale fragile hand on Phillip's arm and gracefully led him away, opening the doors with a short wave of her wand. Phillip followed her and looked over his shoulder. Harry beamed at him in happiness



and thankfulness and Phillip blushed, before turning his head to the front and leaving the room. The doors closed with a bang and Harry's smile disappeared.

"Ron, I want your team of analysts to go over Phillip's memories as soon as we have them. Also, tell the 1st and 3rd raiders to prepare themselves for an afternoon raid. I want to strike fast and hard and drive as many Auror's from Morsmordre as I can." Harry ordered quickly. "Ginny, I want the remainder of the Felix Felicis to be split up into ten different portions and be bottled and ready by this afternoon. Hermione, I read your request for wands for the Muggleborn students. Get their magical signatures and send it to the 4th Raiders. We'll pick them up later."

Ron nodded and saluted Harry briefly, before quickly striding from the room, a smile of expectation on his face. Hermione nodded and gathered her notes and walking away, while Ginny frowned.

"Should I prepare a new batch of Healing Potions as well?" She asked in a raspy voice. "It sounds like you'll be busy this afternoon."

"If you have time you can, but I think we'll be fine." Harry said and Ginny nodded, limping from the room.

"That was very manipulative, what you did Phillip," Neville said, a slight reproachful.

"Neville, Phillip is a coward who dreams of being brave," Harry said bluntly. "I wasn't going to waste an entire afternoon trying to convince him to help us."

Neville nodded, but he didn't look too pleased as he left the room, leaving Harry standing next to the oak table by himself, his green eyes unfocussed and his mind whirling as he plotted this afternoon's raids.

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Diagon Alley had barely changed in forty years. Robed wizards and witches walked along chatting quietly while children darted between their legs, pressing their noses against the windows of the shops. The Leaky Cauldron was still the entrance point to Diagon Alley from Muggle London, but was largely unused and abandoned since the Fall of the Ministry. Inside, a group of six Auror's sat around one of the dusty tables, empty shot glasses and cards and chips scattered in front of them. One of the Auror's was smoking a long pipe, which emitted vaporous clouds of green smoke that smelt like a pair of used socks.

"I got...nothing," One of the Auror's said in disgust, a brown-haired man with a small beard.

“Ha! I win again!” Crowed another Auror, a dark-eyed man with short cropped blonde hair. “Chips come here!” He ordered, and the chips sprang from the table as they hopped towards him.

The other Auror’s grumbled in good-natured disgust while the winner smirked and waved his wand. The cards shot off the table and zoomed into the air widely, swivelling and swerving to avoid each other as they assembled themselves into a freshly sorted deck, before gently floating down to rest in the winner’s hands.

“Another game anybody?” He offered, just as the door that led to the Muggle world opened. Instantly Auror’s shot to their feets, their hands diving into their robes as they pulled out their wands and levelled it at the intruder.

It was an old woman, short and squat, with a large boil on her nose. She was dressed in black robes and limped forward, a slender cane in her hand. She grunted every time her bad foot hit the ground and wheezed through blocked nostrils loudly.

“Halt!” One of the more zealous Auror’s shouted.

“Shut up Moon,” The blonde Auror said in annoyance as he put his wand back into his robes. He walked forward, kneeling down so he could face the old woman in the eye. “Madam, I’m going to need some identification?” He asked gently.

The old woman frowned and raised her head, her beady eyes squinting past the Auror’s face. “Who said that?” She asked in a screeching high-pitched voice. “Whose there? I’ll have you know that my Johnny is a Death Eater for the Dark Lord! If you lay a single hand on me he’ll hunt you down!”

“Ma’am, I am an Auror,” The blonde Auror said a bit more loudly. “I need some proof of identification if I am to let you pass!”

“Give it up, she’s blind and deaf as a bat!” One of his fellows jeered.

“Who said that?” The old woman demanded loudly, swinging her head around. “I’ll give you a spanking you’ll never forget!”

The other Auror’s laughed widely as their fellow flushed and returned to their game as the blonde Auror sighed in resignation.

“Ma’am, do you have a wand?” He asked slowly and loudly.

“Of course I do, I’m a witch, aren’t I?” The old crone snapped angrily. She fumbled within her robes and pulled out a battered piece of wood. She waved it

proudly, cackling in delight as golden sparks flew from the tip in a shower that illuminated the room.

“Ma’am, I need the wand to assert your identity,” The Auror said, reaching for the piece of wood. The old woman gave a panicked cry and took a step backwards, her cane flying up to slap against the man’s hand, who withdrew it quickly with a cry of pain.

The other Auror’s laughed at this, one of them spraying out a mouthful of alcohol as his face turned red. The blonde Auror flushed under the stares of his comrades and great angry.

“Who are you?” He demanded loudly to the old woman.

“You want my name? Well, why didn’t you say so?” The crone exclaimed and with a flourish of her wand, blasted the Auror back with a bolt of orange-coiled magic. The Auror flew through the air before slamming into a wall and crumpling to the ground, while the other Auror’s jumped from their seats, taken completely by surprise.

“*Stupefy!*” Somebody muttered quietly and one of the Auror’s fell to a crimson ray of light in the back. Several Auror’s swung around while the crone dropped her cane and sprinted forward, jumping through the air with her wand outstretched. A flare of magic burst from the tip of the wand just as the crone jumped behind the old bar, and an Auror gave a muffled scream as he was lifted up and crashed into the rood, before falling down and thumping onto the ground.

“*Stupefy!*” Somebody else also muttered quietly, a different voice from the first invisible attacker. Another Auror fell in a blast of crimson magic while the other three flicked their wands sharply. Piercing blasts of magic tore through the walls, tables, chairs and floors. The building gave an ominous croak while the Auror’s threw curses around. Magic tingled in the air, sparks cackling madly in the atmosphere of so much magic, while the bar exploded in a flurry of wooden shards as a well-directed curse tore through it. After twenty seconds of continuous cursing, the Auror’s stopped.

They were all breathing heavily, sweat beading down their foreheads. They cautiously turned their heads, their eyes wide with fear but focussed with determination. One of the Auror’s slowly stepped forward, his wand gripped firmly in his hand, and peered over the shattered remains of the bar. Amidst the broken bottles and shattered glasses lay a single torn robe.

“Well?” One of his fellows hissed anxiously.

“There’s nobody here!” The other Auror hissed back, his eyes darting around nervously. Suddenly there was a tiny scuffling noise above him, and he frowned

and tilted his head upwards. Light blinded his eyes and a pulsing bolt of searing heat struck him on the forehead. He screamed in pain as he was forcefully pushed into the ground, his legs giving way under the enormous amount of pressure of the curse.

*"Stupefy!"* One tiny whisper muttered. From another section of the rood, a blast of crimson light rocketed towards the other two Auror's, who flicked their wands sharply. The stunning hex struck a newly formed globe of shimmering magic and exploded in a shower of spark.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* One of the Auror's bellowed loudly, and from his wand came a jet of dark green light. The air in the room roared to life and a blast of wind roared with the spell, which shot towards the roof where the stunning spell had come from.

There was a muffled exclamation of panic and suddenly something invisible thumped to the ground, sending a cloud of sawdust from the broken wooden furniture into the air. The blast of green light crashed into the roof and a rafter exploded in a burst of flickering green flames of death, casting an eerie light around the room.

*"We have you..."* One of the Auror's began, before a small figure dropped from the roof above the bar. It was the old crone, though the grey curls had partially fallen off and its face was determined and angry. The crone roared, a surprisingly deep sound from such a little person, and she flicked the wand quickly.

One of the Auror's gave a surprised yell as he was swept off his feet by an invisible force, like a fish on a fishing line, and flew through the air, landing on top of the invisible person. Both the Auror and the invisible person gave an audible grunt of pain, before another jet of green light lit up the room and the Auror gasped in fear, his eyes going wide with shock as a jet of green light slammed into his back, seeping into his very being and destroying any trace of life within him.

*"Sweredi!"* The small figure said in a squeaky voice and a white pillar of light erupted from his wand and rocketed towards the last Auror, who thrust his wand out and bellowed an incantation. A silver-tinted ebony shield formed on his arm and the Auror braced himself as the pillar of white sparkling magic struck him. The shield bore the brunt of the attack but the Auror screamed as his shield crumpled beneath the force of the attack, slicing into his arm painfully. The white pillar pulsed as it pushed against the weakening shield and the Auror stepped backwards against his will, as he was pushed further and further away from the old crone. Suddenly he lost his footing and stumbled, presumably over a piece of debris, and the white pillar struck him in the chest. The Auror was blown back like a piece of straw in the wind. Bones snapped and limbs twisted into unnatural

angles as the Auror bounced off the walls and floor, his eyes glazed over and his body limp, before he stopped in a bloody heap in the middle of the pub.

The battlefield was suddenly silent save for the harsh breathing of the invisible person. Six Auror bodies lay crumpled on the ground and while some had just been stunned, others lay in bloody heaps and one was dead. The tables and chairs had been knocked over and destroyed, some of the remains smoked, while the walls and bar had craters in them. Above, the flickering flames that curled at the end of a destroyed rafter illuminated the entire room in a sickly green glow.

"Duncan?" The old crone said squeakily. She flicked her wand and the dead Auror that appeared to be floating off the ground levitated off something invisible and was carelessly thrown aside. Moments later, something shimmered and wavered as a medium sized man with ordinary looks, shaggy brown hair and blue eyes dropped his invisibility spell, climbing to his feet with a hand clutched to his head, wincing as he did so.

"Flitwick?" He mumbled groggily.

The old crone waved her wand and the disguise fell off, revealing that she was in fact a he! Professor Filius Flitwick, once a teacher of charms at Hogwarts, now a Professor at Azkaban and leader of a Raiding team, stood where the old crone had. His eyes, which had once been warm and inviting, were slightly dulled. A layer of hardness covered his cheerful and bouncy attitude as he regarded the man in front of him.

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Filius was one of the best duellers that Azkaban had to offer. When the Ministry had fallen and Hogwarts was on the verge of collapsed, Filius had led the remaining students to Azkaban and placed himself under the leadership of Harry Potter. He had then taught the young man everything he knew about duelling, until seven years later, Harry had surpassed him. Even then, Filius was the second most powerful and skilled wizard at Azkaban and only Harry Potter's bounty was larger than the one on his head.

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"Do you know where you went wrong, Duncan?" Filius asked.

"I didn't silently cast the spell," The man answered dutifully. He winced as he clutched his head even harder and Filius could see blood seeping from the wound. "But I couldn't concentrate properly!"

"That is why Silent Casting is extremely difficult to use in battles," Somebody else said as they revealed themselves. It was a slender woman with billowy blue eyes and glittering dark hair. She looked frail, as if a slight wind would knock her over, but her presence radiated authority and strength and demanded respect. "Which

is why elite duellers such as Filius here will say the incantation and lose stealth to gain speed. But you should have used a more powerful spell if you were going to incantate it, instead of a Stunner.”

Filius raised his wand and approached the man. With a short flick of his wand, he levitated off the ground until he was eye-level to the man and ran the tip of his wand over the gash. The man gasped as golden light seeped from Flitwick’s wand and flowed into the gash, until the cut closed itself and the wound had been healed.

“Melanie, where is Reilly and O’Connor?” Flitwick asked as he dropped to the ground, landing easily on his two feet.

The woman gestured with her head towards the muggle doors. “They managed to apparate into a Muggle taxi,” She answered, a hint of amusement and exasperation in her voice. “They were trying to erase some memories when I left.”

Suddenly the door that led to the Muggle world burst open and a man and a woman rushed in, their wands in their hands and curses on their lips.

“Here they are!” Melanie said and shook her head in annoyance as the two newcomers smiled uncertainly.

“We just had to obliviate a muggle or two...” The man, who had white hair, dark eyes and a mischievous grin, said with a tiny grin.

“I would believe you Douglas,” Melanie said sharply. “If you didn’t have Kylie’s lipstick all over your face!”

Douglas winced while Kylie, a short witch with blonde plaited hair, green eyes and dimples blushed prettily at the words and looked away.

“It was only for luck!” Douglas protested as he slipped his hand into Kylie’s hand and squeezed it gently.

“Never mind,” Filius interrupted. Despite his high-pitched voice and his small stature, the talking immediately ceased. “We do have a job to do,”

Douglas and Kylie both smiled a mischievous smile, their eyes glinting similarly with expectation and trouble.

“Merlin that look’s scary,” Duncan muttered.

Flitwick smiled at his team’s antics and levelled his wand at the fireplace within the walls. He muttered an incantation, his voice rising in pitch and volume as he

waved his wand in complex movements. The air tingled with magic and the fireplace began to glow weakly as Flitwick chanted. Suddenly the fireplace burst out with eerie green flames and Flitwick lowered his wand and shook his head dazedly.

"Are you alright sir?" Douglas asked, his trouble-making smile gone as he watched Flitwick with concern.

"I am quite alright," Flitwick squeaked. "There were powerful charms on that particular grate. However, I was successful. The Floo is down,"

"The silencing charms are still active on this building, which means nobody heard our little ruckus in here," Melanie said softly.

"Now is the time to act," Flitwick said, and suddenly his cheerful exterior disappeared completely. He stood tall and motioned his team towards the door that led to Diagon Alley.

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"That's it," Harry said softly as he and his team peered over a fallen log within some woods. In front of them stood a large two-story house, deep within the abandoned woods of Scotland. Birds chattered playfully as the sun beamed down on them while large trees rose from the ground.

"It doesn't seem very well defended," One of his team members said nervously. His name was Davis, a new member to the group. He was replacing Max, who had died a week ago during a standard hit and run raid, victim to a skilled Death Eater. Davis had brown scruffy hair and dark-brown eyes and showed great potential. Unfortunately, he was rather nervous around Harry.

"Sir, do you see that clump of bushes over there?" Robert asked. He was in his seventies and limped on his left leg, with auburn hair and a grizzled face. While his physical handicap prevented him from being the fastest moving fighter on the battlefield, his talent at duelling listed him as one of the top ten duellers at Azkaban. "It doesn't sway with the wind,"

"The detail is extraordinary." A woman in her eighties muttered. Wizards and wizards lived longer than muggles, so Bowden only appeared to be in her fifties. However, her hair was greyed and her gaze was steely and unrelenting. She radiated a sense of authority and power from her body. She had once been the top Ministry Auror instructor and in Azkaban, only Flitwick and Harry could match her skill with a wand. "But the fools forgot to place reality compensating charms,"

"There are four clumps of bushes like that," A voluptuous woman with smoky green eyes and lustrous raven hair murmured. Jordan had been a Slytherin in her first year when Harry was in his sixth year and was one of the students that

Flitwick had brought over when the Ministry had fallen. She, like the rest of Harry's team, was very skilled.

"Does everybody remember the plan?" Harry asked. At their confirming nods, a dark smile appeared on his face. "Alright. Remember, move hard, move fast and show no mercy. These aren't normal Aurors doing their jobs, these are Death Eaters. They're stronger, faster and more skilled. After the alarm sounds, we have four minutes until their reinforcements will show up. At the four-minute mark, we'll apparate to secondary target. Go!"



*"Thou shall by Immortalised in thy tale...till the end of time cometh ..."***Book of Shezza: Revolutions, 9:41:3**

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The mood of Diagon Alley was peaceful. Wizards and Witches wandered lazily from shop to shop, their purses emptying as time went by. Children laughed playfully as they checked out the new broomsticks, The Starfall, a sleek broom that rivalled the speeds of the Firebolt. Six Auror's patrolled the Alley, delighted to be on what was considered the easiest patrol.

The mood would have lasted until sunset if five dark-robed hooded figures hadn't stalked from the Leaky Cauldron. In the lead was a tiny figure, which had to jog to keep up with the fast paces of his colleagues. The group stormed forward, wands gripped in their hands by their sides, passing witches and wizards, who scurried out of their way. Children stopped laughing and hid as the group went past and suddenly everybody knew something bad was about to happen.

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As the dark-hooded group strode forward, the Auror's finally took notice that something was happening. The closest of them raised their wand, his eyes narrowed in suspicion as he regarded the group. He opened his mouth to say something, when it all began.

*"Deletrius!"* Melanie barked roughly, her wand swinging up, and the disintegrating charm burst from her wand, smooth coils of pulsing dark magic slicing through the Auror, who gave a shriek of pain as his arm literally vaporised, hand and wand disintegrating along with it. He collapsed to the ground in a sobbing heap as the group fanned out and the screaming began. Witches and Wizards picked up their children and darted into shops or ducked behind stands.

*"The Order of Phoenix!"* One of the other Auror's shouted loudly, swinging his wand widely and sending a stream of thunderous flames towards the group. Heat seared through the air as two of the Order members ducked, rolling underneath the flames and springing up on either side of the Auror.

*"Rallentando!"* Kylie whispered to the right of the Auror, flicking her wand sharply.

*"Ampeto!"* Douglas muttered to the left of the Auror.

The Auror jerked his wand away from the blazing inferno, which died down immediately, and tried in vain to shield from the powerful curses. But as the globe of silver-rimmed magic sprung around him, Kylie's curse struck his shield and it shattered in a wave of magical shards, which evaporated in a shower of silver sparks.

Douglas's blasting curse struck him in the chest and he was blasted off his feet. His robes were ripped to shreds underneath the powerful onslaught of magic and he flew back in the air, landing on the ground several metres away, oozing blood from a large charred wound on his chest.

*"Antere!"* Another of the Auror's called out and Douglas gave a cry of pain as something struck him across the face. His vision blurred as he went down under the invisible blow, falling on his side.

*"Refgra!"* Kylie called out, anger sharp in her voice and her green eyes glinting in rage. The Auror swished his wand and the bone-twisting curse was deflected away, striking a nearby window, which shattered underneath the power of the dark curse. The Auror jumped forward, a dragonhide boot lancing forward, and he kicked Douglas across the face, sending him sprawling to the ground as he turned to duel Kylie.

*"Batoak!"* He snapped, a sneer on his dignified face and an elaborate thrust with his wand.

*"Astempe!"* Kylie returned angrily, and a sphere of bronze coloured magic formed around her, which trembled under a powerful invisible blow. Kylie squealed as she was knocked aside by the blow and fell to the ground.

*"Reducto!"* She screamed out as she landed, her wand aimed in the general direction of the Auror. A flash of red magic burst from her wand and as the Auror went to shield himself, the words on his lips; it ripped through his left leg in a shower of bone and blood. The Auror screamed out as his legs gave way and he fell to the ground, withering and groaning in pain. Kylie stood up and with a flourish of her wand; the Auror's face was smashed open under a powerful invisible blow, not dissimilar to the one that had knocked Douglas over. He groggily spat out a loose tooth, blood dripping from his mouth and nose, and blearily looked up, only to meet the sight of a boot slamming down on his head and the angry face of Kylie.

*"Douglas!"* Kylie called after she had dealt with the Auror, dropping to her knees as a powerful curse rocketed above, searing the air with a deadly heat and exploding in a ball of flames on the ground. She turned to face the new threat only to see Melanie leap forward, her wand swinging gracefully around to combat the other Auror, who met her wand with his. Sparks flew from the top as they fought, sliding forward and backwards like two fencers, their wands their swords, as they parried curses, beams and rays of lights bouncing aside and striking the cobbled-alley, tearing up stones and dirt. Finally, Melanie landed in a silver curse, which sliced into the man's chest. He collapsed in a spray of crimson blood, gurgling madly, before a crimson stunning curse sent him slumping to the ground.

"Can you hear me? Douglas? Douglas O'Connor?" Kylie asked frantically as she waved her wand over his body, incantations spilling from her lips. As golden light seeped from her wand and into the bloody gash on his head, Douglas groaned and his eyes fluttered open.

"You're alright!" Kylie said with relief and hugged him impulsively.

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Nearby, Flitwick had dealt with one Auror, stringing him up like a trussed canary and was flicking and brandishing his wand furiously as he duelled with a skilled Auror. Sparks flew through the air as they battled and the Auror retreated beneath the onslaught of Flitwick, his eyes glittering furiously.

"*Cru...*" He began only to snarl out loud as his half-cast curse was parried away. He took another step back, flicking his wand sharply as he did so and a nearby wizard's hat, which had probably been dropped by a fleeing civilian, transfigured into a snarling dog with yellow gleaming eyes, gleaming white teeth and a frothy mouth. It barked angrily as it leapt forward, its face twisted into an animalistic snarl, while the Auror smirked in triumph and with a complicated fluid movement of his wand, sent a rapid barrage of thin slither-like glowing blue shards of magic towards Flitwick, much like a muggle-machine gun.

Flitwick stepped back and twirled on his feet, apparating away with a small crack. He reappeared somewhere down the street and raised his wand, an intense look of determination on his face as the Auror swung his wand around. An amber coloured shield popped into existence around him and the glowing shards of magic disappeared as they struck the shield.

"*Weremando!*" Flitwick returned, his squeaky voice ringing through the air. The very air around the tip of his wand caught on fire and steam arose from the ground around Flitwick. His wand vibrated madly, searing heat rushing through it until a roaring cascade of molten rock burst from his wand with a loud blazing roar. The ground beneath the splash of lava cracked and blackened and the snarling dog was struck in mid-leap, howling in agony as the lava seared through it. Its fur caught alight and it withered in pain as the lava burrowed right through it, transfiguring back into a wizard's hat that promptly caught fire. The stream of lava shot for the Auror, who backed away with wide eyes and prepared to apparate. As he went to do so, something large and firm snapped down on him.

He turned in horror to see Duncan standing ten metres away with a bloody cut on his head and his wand out. The Auror whipped his wand around and prepared to cast a curse when the lava struck him. Immediately he screamed in pain as his robes and hair caught fire. His skin bubbled and churned and his legs gave way as he fell to the ground in spasms, his eyes rolling to the back of his skull as the lava scorched through him. His screams began to die as his brain overloaded on the intense heat and pain he was feeling until he made no noise at all.

Duncan turned away, disgusted at the sight of the Auror being slowly burnt to death and turned to survey the battle. It had been finished within thirty seconds and several mangled Auror bodies lay on the ground, one dead and several critically injured.

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"Melanie, get the wands!" Flitwick ordered as he cast a wary look down the Alley. "Duncan, watch her back! Kylie, Douglas, you take the Apothecary!"

Duncan followed Melanie down Diagon Alley, running after her as she sprinted towards the wand shop. It had once belonged to Ollivander, a Wandmaker who had disappeared decades ago. Since then a new Wandmaker had replaced him and as Melanie burst through the door, the Wandmaker, a very tall and thin white haired man wearing a large pair of spectacle, flinched. His customers, a shabby-robed wizard and his wide-eyed son, flattened themselves against the wall.

"You!" Melanie barked out angrily, her billowy blue eyes narrowing as she sighted the Wandmaker. She pulled out a scroll of parchment and threw it towards the Wandmaker, who caught it automatically. She levelled his wand at him and watched as he squirmed underneath his gaze. "I want you to find the most compatible matches with those magical signatures...and I want it done in two minutes! If you don't..." She trailed off.

The Wandmaker nodded hastily and fumbled for his wand, his fingers shaking so badly that he was barely able to hold it straight. He muttered a spell and the first name of the list glowed in a blue-green light, casting a beautiful low over the darkened shop. In the deep recesses of the shops, something else glowed in the same colour and the Wandmaker frowned and waved his wand. A thin box came flying from the large shelves of wands and floated above the scroll. It too glowed with the same colour as the name and the Wandmaker levitated it around and onto the bench.

"That's one," Melanie said coldly. "There are still more on the list."

The Wandmaker nodded hastily and got back to work, while Duncan glanced at the shivering boy and the terrified wizard against the wall.

"You'll be alright," He said reassuringly.

The boy flinched and pressed himself into his father's robes. The father swallowed nervously but tried to look brave.

"Whatever business you have here is none of our concern!" The father said, his words coming out in a rush. "We don't want anything to do with your war! It's none of our business!"

"None of your business?" Melanie asked, her beautiful features showing scorn. "You prefer living under the tyrannical rule of Lord Voldemort?"

The father flinched at the name while the boy uttered a single cry of panic and wavered in his stance. "Look, I'm a half-blood! I'm just trying to live my life peacefully! As long as I stay out of trouble, the Ministry doesn't bother my son or me! If they even suspected that I was part of the resistance, I would disappear! Permanently!"

"So, you'll live under a reign of terror out of cowardice," Melanie said in disgust, and the man flushed with anger.

"I have a good life!" He snapped. "My job pays me enough to live off, my son is starting Hogwarts, and I am seeing a rather attractive woman! I don't care who runs the Ministry, as long as they stay out of my life and out of my son's life! The Dark Lord lets half-bloods live as long as they swear to obey him and I don't plan on disobeying him ever!"

Melanie sighed and raised her wand. "*Stupefy!*" She intoned and the man slumped to the ground to the sounds of his son's screams for help. Another spell saw the boy fall to the ground, stunned and unconscious to the world. She sighed and glanced at Duncan, a bitter smile on her face.

"This is why Lord Voldemort is winning, because people are too afraid to stand up for themselves!" She said and glanced over at the Wandmaker, who had just placed a seventh wand box on the counter. "You better hurry up because your time is running out!"

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Two minutes later, the Raiders met up in the middle of Diagon Alley. Duncan and Melanie nodded in confirmation to Flitwick; they had the wands, while Kylie Reilly and Douglas O'Connor were busy shrinking boxes and stuffing them in their robes. The alley was completely silent except for the pattering footsteps of a small child as he finally gathered the courage to sprint from behind an overturned ice cream stand and duck into an alley. Flitwick stood among the general destruction of the alley, his wand tracing fiery runes through the air as he held up a temporary anti-apparition ward, waiting for Kylie and Douglas to return.

"We got them," Douglas said, grinning mischievously as he and Kylie ran forward.

"I think Weasley's going to be happy with her new ingredients," Kylie said, flicking her plaits over her shoulder.

Flitwick beamed at the group, who preened under his gaze, until a shudder ran through the dwarfed wizard and the fiery runes shimmered as the temporary

wards came under attack from somewhere else. Another shudder ran through him as the Floo barriers were brought down.

"The floo barriers are down!" Flitwick said and lowered his wand. The fiery runes, no longer powered by their caster, flickered and withered away under the powerful attacks they were facing. "Melanie, cast the mark! Everybody else, to Azkaban!"

"*Eternusflamma!*" Melanie bellowed loudly, letting everybody hear her voice as she raised her wand above her head. As three of her teammates apparated away, a scorching light burst from her wand and something white-hot and fiery flew forward, towards the clear blue sky. A gigantic phoenix made of dark red and orange flames arose, riding on a sea of sparkling blue magic. It hung over the alley as a symbol of defiance, its posture angry and prideful and its eyes burning bright green.

"Very nice work," Flitwick complimented, just as the door of the Leaky Cauldron burst open. A squad of Aurors surged through the doors, led by three black-robed white masked Death Eaters, spectres of evil that seemed to loom forward. Flitwick grabbed Melanie by the arm and raised his wand. He gathered his magic and unleashed it into one last charm before he disappeared with Melanie. His voice echoed in the alley moments after he left, the only warning to what was about to happen.

"*Explodus Extremes Imartur!*"

The ground where Flitwick had been standing groaned and fractured, breaking the cobbled-stones. Jagged cracks zoomed forward, the noise of brittle stones snapping in the air, as they came near the approaching Aurors and Death Eaters. The ground rumbled and shook ominously and several Aurors stumbled as cracks appeared below their feet. Some of them yelled in alarm, others apparated away while some just stood there in dumb incomprehension as the ground creaked threateningly. Suddenly it exploded in geysers of flying stone as explosions rocked Diagon Alley. Aurors were blown off their feet; some were unlucky enough to be under a geyser, while the raining shard of rocks sliced other Aurors open. After what seemed like an hours attack, but it was only a dozen or so seconds, the ground stopped rumbling and Diagon Alley was again silent. Aurors lay on the ground, wounded and bleeding. Several looked particularly bad and three were dead, while a Death Eater laid on the ground, his eyes vacant, his life gone and his body littered with hundreds of tiny shards of rocks. It was over.

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At the same moment, deep in the woods of Scotland, Harry and his team moved stealthily among the trees, hidden from sight by invisibility charms and hidden from various magical detectors by confoundous charms. There were four clumps

of bushes that had been identities as illusions, one at each corner of the safe house that stood in front of them. Whoever was hidden behind them didn't know that they had been surrounded by some of the best duellers in the world.

"Now!" Harry hissed softly and raised his own wand, knowing that the first detection of magic used would set off the alarms. He swiped it carelessly at the nearest clump of bushes and it shimmered and cracked away. Mottled green and brown fell to the ground, melting off the true object and revealing what lay beneath. The object shook its head dazedly and looked around, scratching its head in confusion, before it bellowed in anger as a piercing alarm sounded.

"Trolls!" Robert shouted from the other side of the yard, his invisibility gone as limped forward and his wand levelled at another Troll, an ugly grey brute twice as large as man and ten times as strong. It roared challengingly and lifted a heavy wooden club with its right hand while thumping its chest with its left hand. The troll in front of Harry did the same and from across the yard, he could hear two more Trolls roar.

"*Destche!*" Harry muttered, slashing his wand through the air calmly, and streaks of purple and black flames burst from his wand and sizzled through the air as they seared into the Troll. The Troll roared in agony as the flames ate through its thick hide, blazing into its body angrily. Smoke curled from its wounds on its thick chest and it raised its club in anger, swiping madly at Harry, who rolled to the left as the club slammed down onto the ground where he had just been standing seconds ago. He easily jumped back up and with a quick but complex wand movement had transfigured the club in a puddle of water that splashed harmlessly down on the Troll, who sighed partially in relief, as his burn wounds were soaked.

"*Electrika!*" Harry intoned quietly and watched as a bright cackling bolt of sparkling blue electricity zapped from his wand, striking down the Troll. The Troll screamed as the water that had been drenched upon it conducted the electricity around its body, roaring in agony as smoke curdled from its flesh. It staggered back, its arms waving madly as its muscles clenched and unclenched, its eyes rolling to the back of the skull.

"*Bendemiopo!*" Harry muttered, sending one last curse towards the Troll, a streak of cerulean shimmering energy that slammed against the Troll and exploded in a roar of blue flames. The Troll was literally blown apart as it toppled to the ground, dark black blood oozing from its various pieces that lay among the ground. A putrid smell washed over the clearing, dirty and filthy to the nose and behind Harry, Davis, the new recruit, gagged violently. Harry appeared unconcerned and casually strolled towards the safe house, hearing rather than seeing the death or incapacitation of the other security Trolls.

"Sir?" Davis managed to gasp out when they had gotten away from the rancid smell of Troll innards. "I was just wondering...um...why didn't you just use a Killing Curse?"

"Several reasons Davis," Harry replied, eyeing the first floor windows of the house. He caught a flash of something blue and levelled his wand, flicking it sharply. The window exploded violently, glass and wooden shards showering the inside of the house. He continued talking as he eyed the house carefully, waiting for his companions. "Firstly, the Killing Curse is rather common. It doesn't inspire fear as well as a mangled corpse. It also takes a fair amount of magic to cast it and we still haven't made our way inside the house yet. There's no use tiring out yet," Harry answered, glancing back at Davis who shivered under the brutal but logical reasoning. "Secondly, we want the people inside the house to escape and to make their escape seem genuine."

A dying roar from the other side of the house echoed in the surrounding forest as Joseph finished with his troll, propelling the mangled beast back into the forest with a powerful banishing charm. He nodded towards Harry and limped over to him, his right hand clasping a wand and his left hand a cane.

"Where are Bowden and Jordan, sir?" He asked Harry in a gruff voice.

Harry opened his mouth to respond before closing it and smiling in amusement as he stared over Joseph's shoulder. The two women were being carried on the shoulders of their trolls, both trolls having a blank look in their beady dark eyes. They trolls lumbered up and Harry eyed them with a small grin as the two women were gently lowered from the shoulders and placed on the ground.

"Imperius Curse?" He asked.

"We could use a few more security Trolls," Jordan answered, the voluptuous woman seemingly pleased with herself. "Besides, we can use them to smash down the house."

"Do you think they've got away yet?" Bowden asked, strands of grey hair flying into her eyes in the gentle breeze. She breathed in deeply and smiled softly with half-closed eyes. "We should keep this house Commander, it would make a wonderful holiday home."

"We can't keep the house," Harry answered, smiling at the genuine regret on the older woman's face. "And I think we'll give them another thirty seconds or so,"

"Um...Sir?" Davis asked timidly. "Why are we letting them get away?"

"You fool of a boy!" Bowden snapped sharply, glancing around quickly. "You don't blurt out mission details in hostile environments like this!"



Davis cowed under the fierce woman's gaze and quickly glanced at Harry, anxious to see his leader's reaction. To his surprise, Harry didn't look bothered at all.

"We are all under a powerful silencing ward Bowden," He answered breezily. "And if it were to fall, I would know."

Bowden looked slightly abashed as she withdrew but Harry ignored her as he glanced at his wrist as a thin watch. His battle cloak flapped in the wind as he nodded once and started moving towards the house.

"Let's go!" He commanded. "Jordan, Bowden, put those trolls to good use and kindly smash down the door for me."

Jordan smirked, her smoky green eyes alight as she quested with her mind, wrapping her will around the Troll she controlled and commanding it to attack the door with its club. Bowden did the same and both trolls moved forward simultaneously, their clubs. The ground rumbled as they plodded forward and with a mighty roar, each one swung their clubs. Their clubs slammed into the door and for a moment, a bluish wall of magic around the door trembled, before it snapped under the powerful physical attack. The clubs tore through the door and surrounding walls like a hot knife through butter, debris and dust raining down onto the ground and a loud thump echoing in the small clearing. The Trolls stood back; waiting impassively as Harry casually stepped forward, gingerly stepped over a large wooden shard. He made his way through the rubble and peered behind the remains of the door.

"Why weren't there any powerful wards on the building?" Davis asked Robert. "It is meant to be a safe house, right?"

"Wards are made of magic, the more wards, the more magic used, right?" Robert asked gruffly and Davis nodded. "It look suspicious when there is a such a small concentration of high-powered magic in one small area in a forest and makes it easier to detect. Course, there are wards to get disguise wards, but they take to much effort for a little house like this. Still, I would have expected some better protections than this."

"Stay outside and monitor the perimeter," Harry called out. "The residents will have flooded out by now so expect some Auror's. I'll make sure there's nobody left in the house." He disappeared into the house while his teammates spread out amongst the clearing, poised and ready for an attack.

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Inside, Harry nonchalantly waved his wand to remove the dust that hovered in the air. He peered to his left and right and sneakily walked to the nearest door. With a quick silencing spell on his shoes and the door hinges, Harry opened the

door with a flick of his wand, a curse ready to fly from his wand. But it was empty. He closed the door again and continued his search. The first floor revealed nothing, no useful documents and no people, but on the second floor he met some resistance in the form of a teenage boy with a pale face and shaky hands and a trembling dark haired girl, no older than twelve

*"Stupefy!"* The boy shouted as soon as Harry walked through the door. The stunner that emerged from his wand was average and best and Harry just spun around on his heel, bringing his black cloak up, and the beam of red light struck the cloak and was sucked up into the rough material, which shimmered as it absorbed the magic.

*"Expelliarmus!"* The boy yelled again, and Harry flicked his wand calmly, deflecting the hex with ease.

*"Expelliarmus!"* Harry said, not taking the effort to hide his movements. The boy attempted a shield charm but his movements were jerky and wrong and the magic cluttered around him, never forming, until his wand was ripped from his hand and flew into Harry's hand. The boy paled and took a step back, shielding the small girl from Harry and raising his fists bravely.

"Don't come any closer!" He shouted in a shaky yet confident voice.

"What's your name, kid?" Harry asked in an amused voice while he surveyed the surroundings. He was in a large room that obviously belonged to the children in front of him. There were no Auror's or Death Eater's hidden around to spring out on him and after a few discreet detection spells, Harry confirmed that the kids were alone.

"What's yours?" The kid snapped back, fear and determination waging war in his eyes.

"Harry Potter."

Determination lost and fear prevailed.

"N-No way!" The boy stuttered but he inspected the man in front of him closely. He was wearing dark robes, complete with a dragonhide breastplate, and a dark flowing cloak that twirled and fluttered without the aid of the wind. Emerald green eyes peered from a hooded face, dark hair obscuring the man's forehead, but he could faintly see the famous lightning bolt scar.

"Yes way," Harry answered sarcastically. "Now, what are you doing here?"

"T-This is where we live!" The girl burst out, before uttering a squeak and hiding behind her brother again."

"Really?" Harry asked, genuinely surprised. "I thought that this was a Ministry safe house."

"It was until last week, then my father bought it to live in." The boy answered reluctantly, staring at Harry with fear and hatred. He eyed Harry's wand carefully. "Are you here to kill us?"

Harry frowned, completely ignoring the last statement. "Well, this is what happens when you use two-year-old intelligence." Naturally, the intelligence was much more recent than that but Harry found that disinformation was always a good path, especially since he knew that these kids would get questioned by the Auror's.

The boy and girl were watching him now, but he ignored their stares as he glanced around the house.

"I suppose that you go to Hogwarts?" He asked the boy, who was feeling relieved that the terrible Harry Potter hadn't killed him yet.

"I'm in Gryffindor," The boy said, spitting the last name with disgust.

"You make it sound like it's a bad thing," Harry said, frowning slightly.

"Blood-traitors and mudbloods come from Gryffindor..." The boy began but gasped for breath as Harry flicked his wand and something hard struck him in the stomach, driving all of the breath from his lungs.

"Don't swear," Harry lectured, before he turned to the girl. "What's your name?"

"A-Amelia," She answered, stuttering slightly under the gaze of the well-known traitor and terrorist.

"Does Amelia have a last name?" Harry asked.

"Zabini," Amelia answered softly.

"Zabini?" Harry wondered out loud. "Any relation to Blaise Zabini?"

"He's our Father," the teenage boy growled out in anger, recovering from the blow Harry had given him.

"Really? I went to school with him, you know," Harry said pleasantly.

"I don't care what a blood traitor like you did!" The boy snarled, staring at Harry with hate in his eyes. "Go back to your mudbloods and leave us..."

Harry sharply flicked his wand again and the boy crumpled to the ground as something struck him across the face, a blinding white-hot force that left him stumbling to the ground.

"I think I'll talk to your sister, boy," Harry said, his calm voice never breaking. "She's more polite and much nicer than you are,"

Despite herself, the little girl blushed as Harry smiled at her.

"I apologise for any damage we may have done to your house Amelia," He said amiably. "Purely a mistake on my part, I'm sure."

"Um...that's okay," Amelia mumbled, frowning in confusion at the wizard in front of her. The tales and myths of a psychotic traitor who fought with an animalistic savagery didn't quite match with the wizard in front of her.

"Just out of curiosity, did you like any of the security trolls outside?" Harry asked.

"They stank," Amelia muttered.

"Good," Harry said. "I suggest that you don't go outside until your father gets home. Better off, use the floo and call the Aurors. They'll fix everything up for you."

"We haven't got Floo yet," Amelia said hesitantly. "Father disappears to work everyday and leaves us alone,"

"Then you should wait for him to get home," Harry said. He turned around as if to leave and disappeared with a small crack, leaving Amelia alone with her dazed brother.

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Harry reappeared back outside and instantly uttered a strong curse word, an annoyed scowl on his face.

"What's wrong boss?" Jordan asked, her eyes never leaving the tree line but the worry clear in her voice, while the rest of the team glanced curiously towards Harry.

"The house was sold by the Ministry a week ago. It's a private residence now," Harry answered, frowning in displeasure. "This isn't what I had planned."

"Do we still move to the secondary target?" Robert called from across the clearing.

"No, return to Azkaban," Harry ordered. "If we attack that warehouse now, we'll get the entire Auror department bearing down on us. The house doesn't have floo, so it could be hours before anybody returns and draws the Auror's away."

His team nodded and apparated away from the clearing with small pops, leaving two Trolls who suddenly were free of the Imperius Curse to blink groggily before setting their sights on Harry. One of them growled menacingly and took a thundering step forward, raising its club as it prepared to squash Harry. Harry raised his wand carelessly with a small frown still on his face but noticed a small face peeking from the top window and hesitated, before changing his choice in curses.

*"Avada Kedavra!"*

*"Avada Kedavra!"*

Two green flashes later, the Trolls toppled to the ground, their eyes vacant and unseeing but still whole and unbloody. Harry stared at them for a second before raising his arm and giving Amelia a small wave. The head quickly disappeared as Harry raised his wand, before wavering. He appeared to ponder something, then shrugged and continued.

*"Eternusflamma!"*

A blinding beam burst from his wand and something fiery flew upwards. A gigantic phoenix made of dark red and orange flames arose above the forest, cast on a sea of blue sparkling magic. It hung over the house, its piercing green eyes staring unblinkingly towards the distant horizon as Harry disapparated away.

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## ***Attack on Diagon Alley!***

*By special correspondent Maria Skeeter*

*Department of Media Affairs*

*The Wizarding World was left reeling today after a devastating attack on Diagon Alley left five Aurors dead and one Death Eater dead and over a dozen more wounded. This attack is for sure the worst attack carried out by the Order of Phoenix in three years, matched only by the terrible Westminster murders, where eight high-ranking Death Eaters were murdered in cold-blood. This attack has left the public stunned by the brutal savagery of the Order of Phoenix and many have called for immediate action against the insurrectionary group.*

*Notorious Filius Flitwick, former Professor at Hogwarts and a known terrorist led the attack today with four companions, using powerful dark magic to take down the Auror's stationed at Diagon Alley before raiding both the Wandmaker's store and the Apothecary and stealing over a thousand galleons is rare ingredients and wands. When reinforcements arrived, led by distinguished Death Eater Terrance Higgins, Flitwick cast a powerful curse that killed three Auror's and fatally wounded Higgins. It left eight Aurors wounded and caused over five hundred galleons of damage. Afterwards, Flitwick cast the dreaded Phoenix mark, a fiery apparition that is associated with death and destruction. Filius Flitwick is also a known member of the radical group, The Order of Phoenix.*

*The Order of Phoenix is led by Harry Potter; a radical insurgent that was once a key Auror within the previous corrupt and inefficient Ministry. Harry Potter was once famous for his survival of the Killing Curse and the traitorous deeds performed against our rightful Lord. Once a collaborator in the company of the insane Albus Dumbledore, Harry Potter is considered to be a powerful renegade wizard who has no regard for the good of the magical world. Known to sympathises and associate with Mudbloods and Muggles, Harry Potter seeks to bring about the complete destruction of the noble ways and the systematic obliteration of the Houses of the ancient families. The Order of Phoenix are pawns in his personal vendetta against the Dark Lord and both it and Harry Potter should be eliminated immediately*

*However, the destruction of the rebel group is easier said than done. It is a well-known fact that the Headquarters of the Order of Phoenix is situated on the island of Azkaban, a former Ministry prison that was invaded in the last stages of the war. The island frequently changes location, leaving a drawn out siege impossible. The chances of a successful attack by loyal forces would result in hundreds of casualties in our Auror ranks and leave the Ministry vulnerable to attack...*

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### **Harry Potter attacks Zabini Family**

*At the same time as the attack on Diagon Alley, Harry Potter led a devastating raid on the newly purchased Zabini cottage. Blaise Zabini, Head of the Department of Magical Games, was away at the time but his two young children were home. The security trolls present were slaughtered needlessly and Harry Potter himself broke in the house and assaulted Damac Zabini, Gryffindor aged 16, and Amelia Zabini, Ravenclaw aged 12, before fleeing like a coward as loyal Auror's appeared to apprehend him. This attack is only the recent of a long list of crimes that Harry Potter has committed and....*

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Deep underground Muggle London lay the Ministry of Magic building. A long and splendid hall stretched forward, polished dark wood floorboards and shiny dark wood walls making up most of what is known as the atrium. Highly wrought gilded fireplaces were set into the walls and on the left, robed wizards and witches emerged from them with a whoosh, hastily keeping their heads down and their eyes locked onto the floor as they scurried to work. On the right side there were short queues in front of the departure fireplaces; the occupants looking relieved to be leaving. The roof, which had once been peacock blue, was now a mixture of glowing silver and glistening green and was inlaid with a gigantic dark mark. The skull leered unpleasantly at those who walked below, while the snake flicked its tongue in and out of its mouth, occasionally bobbing its head.

In the middle of the Atrium was a large statue. Once a Fountain of Magical Brethren had stood there but it had been damaged in a duel between Albus Dumbledore and Lord Voldemort and destroyed in the final days of the previous Ministry reign. Now, three cloaked Death Eaters made of ebony obsidian stood proudly, their shoulders back, their chests out and their backs straight. Two of the Death Eaters were masked and stood slightly behind their middle comrade, their wands leveled in front of them at an unseen foe. The tallest Death Eater was unmasked and had the face of a handsome wizard, arrogance and pride etched into his features. His wand was aimed towards the sky and a pillar of shimmering magic rode from the tip, supporting the Dark Mark which lay on the roof.

At the far end of the hall lay a pair of gates. The originals had been destroyed in the war and had been replaced with large silver-wrought gates. Two security desks lay on either side of the gates and wizards and witches bustled towards them, signing themselves in. Next to each desk, four masked Death Eaters stood motionless, their wands by their sides as they guarded the only entrance to the Ministry of Magic. Occasionally two groups of Aurors, twelve men and women in each group, ventured from the gates and lapped the atrium, tense and on edge.

It was a Ministry of fear and power.

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Deep within the Ministry, past the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, was a dark and lavish room. Lit by only a flickering fireplace and a dozen floating candles, the room was made of polished dark wood. Thick furs lined the ground and on the wall and bookshelves lined the walls. In a throne-like chair made from pure gold sat the Commander of the Army of the Pure, more commonly known as Death Eaters. It was Bellatrix Lestrange. Twenty five years ago, Bellatrix had been a prisoner at Azkaban for fourteen years. The effects of the prison had not left her and while she was considered to be in the middle stages of her prime, her features were haggard and gaunt. Two purple eyes gleaming with fanaticism peered from thick dark hair and her bony fingers were wrapped around a jewel-

laid goblet filled to the brim with white wine. Her other hand held a thin wand. Standing in front of her was a very nervous Draco Malfoy.

"Six people are dead," Bellatrix hissed in a hoarse and weak voice. A wicked looking scar had been sliced across her neck, still as raw as it had been twenty years ago when she had received it. A powerful dark curse had given that scar to Bellatrix, courtesy of Harry Potter, and it had only been the timely intervention of Lord Voldemort and powerful magic that had kept her alive. "Why?"

"Madam, the attacks were more vicious than they have been in three years. We could not have properly anticipated such a vicious and powerful attack on..." Malfoy started; a flicker of fear in his eyes before they bulged as something strong clamped down on his throat. Bellatrix calmly lowered her wand but kept the spell active as she regarded her goblet of wine thoughtfully. Only Malfoy was able to comprehend the dangerous glint in her eyes as she raised her eyes to stare into his.

"You dare speak without my permission!" She hissed menacingly, her wand leveled idly towards him.

Malfoy wouldn't have said anything if he could. His face was slowly turning blue as his hands involuntarily leapt to his throat, trying to part away the invisible force that squeezed it. Never did it cross his mind to reach for his wand. The last person who had done that had been blasted apart with such a powerful curse that only a few tiny pieces had ever been found of him.

Bellatrix eyed Malfoy with sadistic amusement and with a casual wave of her wand; Malfoy sucked in a huge breath and gasped loudly, his throat aching and sore. He regarded the dangerous witch in front of her with fear and swallowed nervously, his forehead beading with sweat and his hands involuntarily rubbing his throat.

"The Order has been a thorn in the Dark Lord's side for twenty years," Bellatrix hissed. Her gleaming purple eyes flickered with rage as she continued. "Potter has proven to be resourceful, time and time again. Do not dare say that you underestimated his prowess! It is due to your incompetence that he was able to deliver such a blow!"

Malfoy nodded quickly, swallowing down his fear as he regarded the livid witch in front of him. His hands flew back to his sides and he straightened up, trying to conceal his trepidation.

"There are times that I long for Harry Potter, so that I can bestow upon him my ..." Bellatrix started, before an utter look of malevolent rage crossed her face and suddenly she transformed from an articulate pureblood to a raging madwoman. She let out a piercing scream of rage and stood up, hurling the goblet at the wall



with all of her strength. It struck the wood and shattered; splatters of wine dribbling down amongst the shards of gold and gems.

"I hate him! He ruined me, he ruined my husband! I want him dead...Dead! I want to find him, torture him...knives, yes! Watch him bleed...make him bleed...Carve into his flesh, destroy him, mind, spirit, body...I will devour him, consume his very magic! He will beg for death, for mercy, but he shall receive none! Yes....kill, rip, tear into him! Blood...drain him...." Bellatrix spat out maniacally. Her eyes were bright with madness and her face was twisted into a snarl of insanity. Nearby, a large pitcher of wine suddenly exploded in a rain of glass shards as her control over her magic lessened. Her mouth was foaming, white froth tinged with red blood; she had probably bitten her tongue again.

Malfoy had taken several steps backwards and was pressed against the wall, fear raging through his body. Bellatrix's psychotic sessions were terrifying to talk about, let alone witness. The last two people who had been unfortunate to be witness an attack like this had not made it out alive. One of them had been blasted to pieces with such ferocity that they were still looking for the pieces, while the other had been mutilated badly and died a few hours later at Saint Mungos

But Bellatrix seemed to be calming down. Her wand, which was still clasped tightly in her bony hand, was shooting out cackling dark sparks, but it was dying down and Malfoy cautiously approached her, eyeing her wearily but the madness had left her.

"But it does not matter," Bellatrix said and sat back down again as if nothing had happened. "Soon, the time will come! It will be only a matter of weeks before the Order is destroyed. You Malfoy; do not fail me until that time! "

"Madam?" Malfoy ventured carefully. "May I ask what you have in mind?"

"It's very name is top secret," Bellatrix said slowly, after a few seconds. She regarded Malfoy carefully and suddenly a terrible smile came upon her face. "You are not privy to such information. But be ready, nephew! Be very ready indeed!" Her face was taught with anticipation and terrible longing and Malfoy squirmed under her gaze until he blinked and looked away.

Bellatrix leaned back into her throne, sighing in pleasure at the numerous comfort and cushioning charms. She frowned at the broken goblet and pitcher and gestured at Malfoy. "Bring me another goblet and some more wine!"

Malfoy immediately made his way to the door to carry out her order until her voice stopped him and he turned around.

"I want all Auror reserves placed in active duty. There will be regular patrols in Diagon Alley. Increase the security of our safe houses, Potter attacked the Zabini House because it was a former safe house. If it is required, take Auror's from the Ministry and Morsmordre. They are sufficiently defended without them." Bellatrix ordered. A twisted smile curved her lips as she pondered something. "And tell my Death Eater's that tomorrow night's excursion is still on. I am in the need of some...fun."

"It will be as you ordered." Malfoy said quickly and nearly sighed in relief when she dismissed him with a wave of her hand. As he opened the door to leave, her voice reached him one last time.

"Firstly, bring me my wine!"

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### *The Next Day*

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"Well, it worked," Ron said as he leant on the long oak table in the meeting room. "The streets are absolutely crawling with Auror's. Hopefully we've drawn out enough from Morsmordre."

Harry nodded as he stared out of the window and out towards the ocean. The noon sun shone brightly in the clear blue sky, but on the horizon dark clouds loomed ominously. Harry knew that there would be a storm tonight, which would help his raid immensely.

"What about Phillip's memories?" Harry asked. "Are they of any use?"

Ron nodded, his scarred face crinkling up horribly as he smiled grimly. "We've got several entry points and we're working on the plan now."

"Good," Harry said and smiled. It wasn't a pleasant smile and it promised pain to those it was directed at. "They'll never know what hit them."

"What teams are you sending?" Ron asked in curiosity as they both left the room.

"My team and Kingsley's," Harry answered as they walked through a narrow stone hallway, made of the same dull stone as the rest of Azkaban. R

Ron nodded as they both emerged from the hallway and entered a moderately large room. Large tables were covered in scrolls and massive sheets of paper, some detailing architectural plans of various facilities while others were filled with small spindly writing. At least twenty wizards and witches hurried amongst the room, some waving their wands to summon an occasional scroll. On the wall were several photo-like pictures, revealing dark and damp tunnels and a gloomy

island. They were covered in brightly glowing dots and circles and two witches and a wizard dressed in the standard Azkaban black robes were talking animatedly over one of them, gesturing wildly. A nearby wizard was muttering under his breath as he waved and swished his wand over a pensieve, extracting a slither-thin string of glowing silver from the large basin. Once the wizard had extracted it, he flicked his wand and started chanting long incantations as he began the delicate process of transforming the raw memory into pictures suitable for analysis.

“What’s the plan so far, Ted?” Harry asked a nearby wizard. The small balding wizard looked up, large eyes behind a thick pair of glasses. He had tufts of grey hair growing from behind his ears and his nostrils continually flared as if he smelled something bad. He was the leading analyst and strategist in the Order and had once been part of the original Order of Phoenix, joining up after the death of Dumbledore.

“We’re still working on it, sir,” he replied grumpily. Ted was always grumpy; he had been since the Death Eater’s had invaded his home for amusement and killed his wife and six year old son, merely because his wife had been a Muggle. “But this is what we’ve got so far, so shut up and listen...sir,” He added belatedly, but Harry waved off the rude tone and listened intently as Ted started explaining what they had come up with so far.

When the balding man had finished, Harry nodded in approval. “Good work,” He praised.

Ted nodded sourly and turned back to one of the pin-ups, frowning as he considered another alternative.

“When should I alert Kingsley?” Ron asked quietly amongst the mutterings of the room.

“It’s roughly noon now, so we’ll attack at six.” Harry answered. “That should still give us a few hours before Bellatrix shows up. We think that there’s only thirty or so Muggleborns imprisoned at the moment, so the raid should last twenty minutes if it works.”

“If it works” Ron echoed in part amusement and part resignation.

Harry shrugged slightly. “These things rarely do,” He said, a touch bitterly, as he left the room.

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At six o’clock, the sun had almost gone down. The last verges of light were rapidly diminishing and large angry clouds had gathered in the sky, spewing out sheets of rain. Thunder roared in the air, lightning flashing violently, and the sea

became choppy and rough, white-capped waves pounding into the island docks of Morsmordre. The island was well defended inland, with thick stone walls wrapped around an imposing castle fortress. However, the small docks were not part of the stronghold and lay on the south side of the rocky island. A long jetty jutted out from a small inlet, which was sheltered underneath a small warehouse. Fires roared in their torches along the walls and amidst the stacks of wooden crates, the wind howled eerily. For the five Auror's on guard, it was the worst post on the island and none of them were particularly happy at the moment.

"Merlin curse them," One of them snarled, withdrawing a pocket watch from his Auror robes and glancing at it in the dim light of the warehouse. "How long will they be?"

"The supply boat will get here when it gets here," One of the other Auror's snapped, clearly irritated at his partners whining. "Now shut up!"

While prisoners were taken to the island by either Floo or Portkey, supplies came every week in a rickety little vessel from the nearest Wizarding port. An unexpected delivery had been called in that night just hours ago, which was why the Auror's were standing out in the cold rather than inside the castle. Lightning flashed again and sleets of rain pressed a wave of coldness amongst the robed men, causing them to shiver despite the numerous warming charms applied to them.

"Wait, I see something!" One of the Auror's said and squinted into the darkened sea. Waves pounded furiously against the wooden docks, spraying the men with droplets of water as they moved forward. Sure enough, a small light was approaching them.

"Pity, I thought they had capsized and drowned," the whiny Auror muttered to himself as the boat approached. It was a shaky vessel made from rotten wood and most likely held together by magic alone. As it came closer, the Auror's could see five crouching robed figures sat around a stack of wooden crates identical to the ones in the warehouse behind them. They were beneath an invisible dome, which shielded them from the rain as it pelted against the magical shield. Still, the figures were shivering and had huddled together. As the vessel magically propelled itself with an unseen force, one of the people looked up and waved vigorously. Although it was too dark to make out his features, the Auror's could tell that there was an expression of relief on his face.

"Why are there five of them? The last shipment of food only needed two," One of the Auror's muttered to his companions as the vessel moved underneath the warehouse and towards the end of the inlet.

"Thank the Dark Lord," One of the hooded and heavily robed men panted in exhaustion from the boat. He stood up, shivering slightly as he got up from the

boat and climbed onto the pier. He apparently didn't notice the suspicion of the Auror's as he turned to his colleagues and gestured towards the crates. Quickly, they all began swishing their wands and levitating various crates onto the pier.

"Why are there so many of you?" An Auror asked as they all approached, their wands clasped firmly by their sides. With the recent attacks performed by the Order of Phoenix, they were understandably cautious.

The man grunted as he levitated another crate off the boat. His head was covered but the Auror's could tell that he had dark skin. "Boat needed all of our magic to propel itself through this storm," He said as he dropped the crate on the pier. "It's a piece of rubbish but the company still makes us use it."

After a few minutes, the delivery had all been taken from the boat and placed on the pier. The man sighed in obvious relief and turned to the Auror's, reaching into his robes for something.

"Don't move!" An Auror shouted as they all leveled their wands at him.

The man rolled his eyes in annoyance as he removed his hand, producing a scroll of parchment from his robes and tossing it towards the Auror. "You have to sign for the delivery," He muttered in obvious irritation.

The Auror who had caught the scroll sagged as he put his wand away; rubbing the bridge of his nose tiredly as he gestured for the other Auror's to lower their wands.

"Sorry," he muttered. "It's been a long day. You must have read the Daily Prophet; the Order's at it again."

The man nodded sympathetically before he quickly turned around and clasped his hands to his ears as the Auror opened the scroll. For a split second, just stared at four intricate runes, frowning in puzzlement before comprehension dawned on him. As it did, a brilliant white light pulsed from the runes on the scroll and an eerie wail screeched in the air for a single-second, before suddenly both the light and noise was gone.

The robed man turned around and removed the hands on his ears. On the boat, his colleagues did the same and they all turned to regard the Auror's, who were lying on the damp ground with blood dripping from their noses, ears and closed eyelids, their wands lying uselessly next to them.

"Nice spell-work Collins," Kinglsey Shackelbolt remarked as he prodded one of the Auror's with his feet.

"Thank you sir," A man with dark blue eyes and grey streak in dark hair remarked casually, shedding the thick bundles of robes that he wore. Underneath, he wore the black dueling robes of the Order. His companions also shed themselves of their thick robes while Kingsley tied up, gagged and immobilized the Auror's for good measure. He swept his wand and the Auror's slid across the ground towards the stacks of crates. With another flourish of his wand, the crates that the Raiding party had bought with them, empty of course, flew from their positions on the ground hovered over the area. With a mumbled incantation, they formed a nice stack of crates that effectively hid the Auror's from view.

"Ellie, Haldeman, are you done with the boat?" Kingsley asked when he was finished. He turned around to see Ellie, a albino women with pink eyes, pale skin and white hair, working with Haldeman, a new recruit with short blonde hair, nervous grey eyes, as they both disillusioned and warded the boat with notice-me-not charms. It never hurt to have a second way out.

"Woods, you're with me at the front," Kingsley ordered. A man with dark hair who appeared to be in his forties nodded, an arrogant look etched into his face. He was, however, well liked amongst the group. "Ellie, Haldeman, you've got our back. Collins, you're our scout. You all know the signals, let's go!"

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Thunder rumbled ominously and lightning flashed once or twice every few minutes as the group stealthily made its way up a path filled with running water and mud towards the large walled castle. While it was nowhere as impressive as Azkaban, its high walls and forbidding look was enough to make people fear its very name. The permanent Dark Mark that shone in the sky, the skull sneering down at the ground and the snake that hissed silently, also helped to inspire a certain amount of fear. Rain pelted down as the group left the path and crept towards the outer walls. Because of the large storm, there were few patrols outside and Kingsley's group was easily able to avoid the patrols that were there, the Auror's more concerned with getting out of the rain rather than a potential break-in.

"Sir!" Collins called softly from a few meters away. "It's over there!"

Kingsley nodded and turned his head back. With a few deft movements of his fingers, he ordered the group to follow him as Collins led him to their primary access point outside the greater wall. It was a small tunnel guarded by a single Auror, which led to the quarters of the House Elves of the prison. Apparently, House Elf magic was severely restricted, possible because at one point there had been a few House Elves that had been prisoners, and they enjoyed being outdoors whenever they were able to.

The Auror stood at the entrance to the small tunnel with a weary stance and tired eyes. Kingsley motioned again and held up three fingers, then two, then one. The

Auror never stood a chance as from the darkness, five figures jumped forward. Blasts of pure air and invisible forces pounded into the Auror, who let out a weak gurgle as his ribs snapped under powerful bashing spells, and a powerful concussion charm struck him in the head and knocked him unconscious. All of the spells that had been used had been spells that did not produce flashes of light, so Kingsley was fairly certain that they hadn't been discovered.

The group took a few steps into the tunnel until Kingsley halted them and gestured something. Collins stood where the Auror had been standing while Woods dragged the unconscious body out of the rain and visible sight. Ellie and Haldeman took guard at the front of the Kingsley, who fiddled with a small spindly object and placed it on the ground.

"What's that?" Haldeman asked softly.

"A beacon of sorts," Kingsley answered in his deep baritone. "It will draw Commander Potter's Portkey to this location."

"I thought you needed a Ministry issued Portkey to get passed the wards?" Haldeman asked curiously, while Wood tied up and gagged the Auror.

"He's got one, he just needed a location or he could have wound up anywhere when he tried to use it." Kingsley answered. "And before you ask me, no, I don't know how he got it."

Haldeman nodded just as five dark-robed people appeared soundlessly. Harry Potter stared at Kingsley Shacklebolt with gleaming green eyes while his companions spread out along the tunnel, their wands out and poised. A small smile curved on Harry's lips as he gestured forward.

"Shall we?"

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The group of ten renegades moved stealthily along the dark and damp tunnels. At various points there would be aged torches lining the walls, most likely for the convenience of the Auror who had to stand guard rather than the house elves. While light was dim, there was enough for the group to see where they were going. Rain dropped from the jagged stone roof, echoing eerily in the long tunnels while outside, thunder boomed menacingly. Some of the taller members of the group had to duck their heads as they walked to avoid overhanging rocks, since the tunnels had been made for house elves. After two minutes of walking, Harry stopped the group at adjoining tunnel and turned to Kingsley, pointing towards the left tunnel as he talked.

"This tunnel will take you to level one, where some of Voldemort's political prisoners are being held. Free them and give them these Portkey. They're touch

activated and there's a five second delay," Harry commanded as he held out a small box of shiny marbles. Kinglsey took the box as he nodded his acceptance of the orders and gave motioned for his team to follow him as he disappeared down the dark and long tunnel.

"Where are we going, boss?" Davis asked nervously, his brown hair scruffier than normal.

"Third Floor, Muggleborn prisoners," Harry answered as he gestured towards the right tunnel.

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After Harry's group had walked down the tunnel for ten minutes, they reached a small room that contained rusty set of iron stairs that spiraled upwards. The room had two House elves in it, both carefully carrying a platter of steaming hot food each. When Harry entered, both House Elves froze in shock. They were dirty and ratty looking creatures, heavily scarred from abuse and skinny from neglect. However, like most house elves, they were fanatic about their masters, and they dropped their platters and tried to sprint up the stairs.

"*Stupefy!*" Davis said quickly, his wand flying into his hand, and a blast of crimson magic spiraled towards the first elf and knocked it off the stairs. It landed on the ground with an audible thump, unconscious, while its partner raised its hand desperately, trying to summon some of its magic. But the powerful magical restriction wards layered around the castle only allowed them to cast their magic in a few places, and the stairwell was not one of them.

Another blast of magic slammed into the House Elf and it crumpled to the ground, next to the dropped platters of steaming food, which lay on the ground in a heap. Bowden grunted as she quickly surveyed the room for any other threat, while Jordan went to the bottom of the staircase, her wand leveled upwards as she tried to peer past the shroud of darkness. Robert limped towards the food and knelt down. He gathered a handful of meat covered in a rich thick sauce and threw it in his mouth, chewing noisily as he sampled it.

"That's disgusting, Robert," Jordan said, her beautiful looks wrinkled up in disgust.

The grizzled man shrugged and stood back up, only wobbling slightly on his crippled leg. "It's quite nice, actually,"

Jordan shook her head, partly in disgust and partly in amusement, while Harry tapped the stairway with his wand and muttered several Latin phrases. The stairway shimmered as magic poured from his wand, coating the metallic surface and Harry withdrew his wand, seemingly satisfied.



"I've placed powerful silencing wards over them," He told his group. "They shouldn't creak. I've also placed a few supporting charms on them, just in case. I doubt that they were designed our weight."

"Are you calling me fat?" Jordan said, raising an eyebrow saucily. Harry merely looked at her and she grinned as the group moved on.

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Morsmordre prison was a large prison capable of holding over a thousand criminals. The prison cells were divided by levels around a long courtyard, built into the walls. Metal walkways had been built into the walls and Auror's routinely patrolled them, crossing over the bridges from one side of the room to another. Inside thick iron bars and powerful magical wards was the cell itself, no larger than three by three meters. A rickety bed was welded in one side of the room and a dirty and smelly toilet was on the other side. There were fifty cells per level, twenty five cells on each side of the courtyard walls, and ten levels. Currently, Morsmordre was operating at less than a quarter of its capacity and held roughly thirty newly discovered Muggleborns, some as old as seventeen and others as young as six.

An Auror walked past the small niche where the stairway of the house-elves, he never saw the slim wand leveled at him or the whispered Unforgivable Curse that dove into his mind and suppressed his free will. He stopped walking as a blank expression filled his face, his eyes vacant and devoid of logical thought as Harry whispered suggestions into his mind. After a few seconds of initial resistance, the Auror obediently obeyed what he was told and continued his patrol. Behind him, five disillusioned figures broke from the stairway and headed towards the two other Auror's patrolling the level.

*"Imperio!"* Jordan muttered again at another robed Auror, with a large beard and grey stern eyes, and he stopped with a start. This Auror had been much more trained to resist the Imperius Curse than the other Auror, but in the end it was not enough. Jordan's specialty was the Imperius Curse and it was not uncommon to see Auror's surrounding her during a fight, protecting her with their very lives as their free will was ripped away from them.

*"Imperio!"* Bowden whispered on the other side of the room and snatched the will of the third Auror with a short jab of her wand. Her head was craned upwards, at the forth floor. She could see an Auror walking directly above her, no less than ten meters away and his shoes making a distinctive thud on the metal grating. She was very quiet as she instructed the Auror to begin opening cell doors. From across the other side of the room, the first captured Auror had already opened the first door and Harry had walked into it.

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Harry ducked into the cell and glanced around. A teenage boy with a severe acne problem and a look of fright on his face was sitting on the bed. He was dressed in a shiny pair of jeans, Muggle fashion of the day, and a shirt bearing the latest popular Muggle musical group. He shrunk back in his bed as Harry approached and spoke up with a quavering voice.

"W-What do you want?" He asked, shivering at the coldness of the night. "I've already t-told you, I don't h-have any m-magic, I swear!"

"You do have magic, or you wouldn't be here," Harry disagreed softly. He reached into his robes and pulled out a shiny marble. "This is a prison break. If you want to escape, touch this."

The boy looked completely flabbergasted but took the marble hesitantly. After a few seconds, he vanished without a sound as the Portkey activated, bypassing the Anti-Portkey wards and disappearing to Azkaban, where teams of healers waited. Harry moved out of the cell, closed the doors inaudibly and moved towards the next cell. He commanded the Auror to open it and watched as the Auror placed a key in the lock and turned it. The key was much more than a piece of iron, it was keyed into the wards that layered the cells and turned them off as it opened the door.

Harry walked into this cell, but had to duck as a young girl of about twelve hurled a crumbled rock at him, taken from a cracked stone in the wall. The rock shot past him and suddenly stopped in mid-flight, seconds away from clanging into the rail and drawing attention. He summoned it back to him quickly as he turned to face the livid and frightened girl, who had taken in a deep breath, was prepared to scream.

"Stop!" Harry hissed softly, casting a quick look out of the cell. Luckily nobody had seen or heard anything.

The girl closed her mouth and watched him with a scared but defiant look on her face.

"This is a prison break," Harry told her and enjoyed her bewildered look that washed over her face. He handed her a small marble, which she took dazedly, as if she couldn't believe what was happening. After a few seconds, she disappeared and Harry moved onto the next cell.

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Unknown to Harry or the Order, Morsmordre had a monitoring station on the ground floor which monitored all magical activity in the prison. While it was unable to detect individual spells because of the powerful wards that surrounded the complex which interfered with magical detection methods, it was able to pick

up a series of Portkey departures, at least twenty five on level three and twelve on level one in under five minutes.

“Are there any scheduled Portkey departures listed?” A worried Auror asked his partner who flipped open a scroll and peered down at it. After a few seconds of scanning the contents, the Auror shook his head and frowned.

“You better alert the Auror’s on those floors and see what’s happening,” He said.

The other Auror nodded and stood up from his cluttered workplace, taking a pinch of powder and throwing it into the flames, which roared green as the Auror stuck his head through it.

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The last Muggleborn disappeared from the prison and Harry sighed softly in relief as he climbed out of the cell, brushing off dust and cobwebs from his robes as he peered around. Jordan had just entered the second last cell on the right side of the room, while Bowden was down the far end of the pathway, nodding her head at him in confirmation. Davis and Robert had been placed on guard duty and were no doubt lurking around here somewhere. Suddenly, a clutter of noise broke out from beneath them. Feet pounded along the metal grating as somebody sprinted down the stairs. There were muffled shouts and suddenly blasts of lights illuminated the large courtyard in different shades of colours as curses and hexes were thrown around.

“*Reducto!*” Somebody screamed; a high-pitched panicked voice.

“*Refgra!*” Another person boomed, and Harry recognized the deep baritone of Kingsley. The other spell-caster screamed in pain as he or she was presumably struck and started sobbing. Suddenly a piercing alarm shrieked through the air as the prison stirred to life. Harry growled in irritation at the sound of hurrying footsteps above him as Auror’s moved in, no longer sleepy or dreading the storm.

They had been discovered.

### ***Raider Team 1***

*Harry Potter: Medium hight, emerald green eyes, charcoal black hair, streaks of grey*

*Jordan: Forties, woman, voluptuous, smoky green eyes, glossy dark hair*

*Robert: Seventies, limping left leg, greyed man, auburn hair*

*Davis: Newbie, twenties, determined to do well, brown scruffy hair, dark brown eyes, medium height*

*Bowden- Woman, eighties, greyed, former Auror Instructor at Ministry, small height*

### ***Raider Team 4***

*Kingsley Shackelbolt: Dark Skin, gold earring, tall and strong*

*Elie: Pale albino woman, pink eyes, pale skin, white hair, petite*

*Collins: Dark blue eyes, sixties, grey streak in dark hair, medium height*

*Woods: Forties, arrogant but liked, dark hair, mocking battle style, medium height*

*Haldeman: Newbie, short blonde hair, nervous grey eyes, tall*

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**Warning: This chapter contains violence and graphic material. You have been warned.**

**This is called a warning, which not only makes sure the reader is aware of any potential graphic material, but covers my own arse from the Mods.**

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“Fuck!” Harry swore violently as the piercing alarms ran through the fortress, shrieking madly as Auror’s rushed from their sleeping quarters half-dressed, their wands out and ready, streaming into the ground floor from different doors. On the third floor, Harry could see them swarming about, looking up as Kingsley’s team slammed through the last of the Auror guards on that level and began to send down streaks of coloured magic at the Auror’s, who dodged and shielded themselves and hurled dangerous curses right back up at them. He whirled around and saw Bowden, Davis and Robert moving across the walkways at a jog, their wands poised and ready.

"Sir, what happened?" Davis yelled over the shrieking alarms.

"I don't know," Harry answered loudly. He involuntarily flinched as an orb of sparkling and cackling blue-green magic soared from below, right past the walkway he was on, and exploded in a wave of magical sparks and arcs on the catwalk right above them. It creaked ominously; metal screeching as its supports were blasted away and gravity ripping through the welding, before it gave a final groan and fell.

Davis dived out of the way while both Harry and Bowden raised their wands. They said nothing, but something that was felt rather than seen, something large and powerful and emanated magical power, burst from their wands. The falling metal suddenly flew through the air, as if its centre of gravity had changed, and landed in a broken heap on the other side of the Third Floor.

"Where's Jordan?" Harry asked Robert; who at that moment was peering down at the battle going on below them on the First Floor and the Courtyard. Kingsley's team had pushed the Auror's back off the First Floor. Three of the four stairways were twisted heaps of rubble, still smoking from the powerful curses that had destroyed them, and Kingsley's team fought at the top and base of the last stairway, taking cover behind the walls and alcoves.

Robert didn't answer but Davis spoke up from the ground, gesturing towards the last of the cells.

"She was in there, last I saw anyway." The man responded shakily, glancing at the scrap metal that had almost ended his life with a visible shudder.

Harry nodded and turned his head to where Davis had gestured, where Jordan was leaving quickly with two muggleborn children in tow. One looked to be only seven, a boy with long strands of blonde hair and watery blue eyes. He was being held in Jordan's arms, while the other was an older girl, about fifteen, with wavy brown hair and fearful green eyes. Jordan noticed Harry's look of surprise and dismay and shrugged half-heartedly as she approached.

"New wards have gone up and they don't let the pre-programmed Portkeys out," Jordan explained. She gestured to the girl by her side. "This is Isabel. The boy in my arms is Michael."

Harry sighed in frustration. It was just plain bad luck that those two muggleborns had been left behind rather than a failure on Jordan's part. Still, luck or not, it would dampen the team's ability to move and fight if they had to be constantly looking out for them. Suddenly, the complex rumbled worryingly as a powerful curse struck the thick fortifications. Dust sifted from the stone walls and the walkways shook and rattled loudly. Below, the fighting only seemed to intensify, and Harry made his decisions.

"Jordan, Use the Imperius Curse and get somebody to look after these two," He ordered slowly as he thought carefully on his strategy. "Bowden, take Davis and go across the pathways and down to Floor One. Repair the bridge and attack those Auror's from behind. We'll back up Kingsley's team and charge them while they're distracted. Go!"

At once, Bowden and Davis sprinted across one of the pathways that connected the two sides of the third floor together, while Jordan chanted something under her breath as she jabbed her wands towards the Auror's they had captured and controlled beforehand. She finished her spells and bent down on her knee to look the little boy in the eye, glancing up towards the girl as she spoke.

"Listen, these men are going to look out for you. Stay behind them at all times," she instructed gently, her green eyes softening as she talked.

"B-But those are the bad men!" The boy said in a shaky voice, glancing fearfully at the unmoving Auror's.

"They listen to me now," Jordan said intently. "They don't have any choice but to obey me,"

"Like mind control?" The girl spoke up in surprise.

"Exactly like mind control. Actually, it is." Jordan agreed quickly. "So stay behind them. If a curse or hex...er, a streak of light, comes close, let it hit them rather than you."

"Above us!" Robert suddenly yelled. His head was craned upwards as he raised his wand, jumping out of the way just in time as a billow of dark purple and black flames roared over where he had been standing. The metal rails caught alight under the onslaught of the dark magical flames and a terrible smell of sulphur and a wave of dizzy-inducing heat seared through the air.

Harry moved quickly, flicking his wand once to dispel the flames and flicking it again to retaliate. The Auror above them had jammed his spell through the metal grating to conjure the wave of flames. This was his undoing, for the few seconds he needed to stand up cost him his life. On Harry's second flick of his wand, a thin slither of magic shot from his wand and soared through the air towards the Auror. It looked vaguely like an arrow head, except that it was made from gleaming solidified yellow magic, which glowed brilliantly as it shot through the air with deadly accuracy. The Auror never made it up as the powerful piercing curse tore through the metal grating as if it were paper, much like the way it tore through the Auror's head a second later. The body fell with a loud thump against the grating as Harry lowered his wand, his eyes quickly scanning the rest of the grating above them.

"Good shot, sir," Robert remarked nonchalantly, while the two children stared in horror at the body, unable to tear their eyes away. A thin dribble of blood had started to form and dripped from the walkway above, slapping against the third floor with a squelching noise, which mingled in with sounds of battle below.

"Jordan, will your Imperius Curse hold on them?" Harry said, ignoring the body as he addressed Jordan.

Jordan nodded with a nasty smile on her face. "I've strengthened the curse and placed a few other spells that weaken the will and dull the mind," she said.

"Good. Order them to look after the kids; we're going to help Kingsley. We'll take the second way out," Harry finished and with a few quick hand sign started moving.

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Most of the second floor was completely deserted as Harry and his team moved down the stairs. Over the other side of the courtyard, three Auror bodies lay motionless on the grated metallic walkways. Through the metal grating, Harry could see Kingsley's team huddled behind the walls and cells, their wands returning curses and sending blasts of magic back down at the Auror's. He moved hurriedly forward, glancing to the left to see Bowden and Davis on the other side of the floor, running across the metal pathways to reach the stairs. Both parties reached the stairs at the same time and surged down them.

The first thing Harry saw as he reached the bottom of the steps was a streak of ugly rotten-brown magic that radiated a sense of sickness and disease soaring towards him. He swished his wand, his mouth automatically mumbling an incantation, and the curse suddenly exploded in a shower of red sparks, rocking the metal grating roughly. Next to Harry, half-covered by a small alcove, Kingsley Shackelbolt sent a burst of red fiery darts from his wand and sent Harry a look of relief and gratitude. The members of Kingsley's team were all pinned down behind small alcoves or in the case of an albino woman, a cell itself. On the ground floor, there were at least thirty Auror's who had milled around the stairs. Some temporary barricades had been placed up, hastily conjured chests and overturned tables, and seven Auror's lay in a heap at the bottom of the stairs, one of them with a large hole in his chest that oozed out dark blood.

Harry immediately ducked into the alcove with Kingsley, while his team successfully leapt for one of the cells, as twenty or so streaks of different coloured curses rocketed towards the steps. They impacted on various sections of the metal pathway and while some disappeared in a shower of sparks, several of them tore through the metal of the stairs leading to the second floor. Sparks flew, not magical sparks, as the metal staircase groaned in protest as before it collapsed with an enormous bang that echoed loudly around the courtyard.

He took the split-second to glance across the other side of the first floor and saw Davis and Bowden looking at him. The stairway to the ground floor had been repaired, at least, temporarily, and they now hid in one of the cells from the Aurors. Harry nodded and lifted his hand, holding up three fingers. Bowden nodded and started whispering urgently to Davis while Harry turned to Kingsley.

"I need a barrage of curses from everybody, right now!" He ordered quickly but firmly.

Kingsley nodded and stood up. He cupped a hand over his mouth and took a deep breath. "Bombard them!" he roared in determination, and leant across from the alcove with his wand out.

Harry heard several shouted incantations and shouted out his own, a deliberate move to make this sound more intimidating, and suddenly powerful blasts of magic erupted from various positions around the stairs. Some of the power behind the curses was phenomenal and raw magic flittered through the air, cackling in random bursts as the smell of burnt ozone leaked into the air.

On the ground, Aurors yelled in panic as they ducked and dodged the powerful barrage of curses, which impacted on overturned tables and the stone floor. Rock chips burst from the ground as the floor exploded beneath the power of the curses and one of the tables burst into a large fireball. An Auror screamed in agony as the wave of heat produced by the table seared into his skin and jumped up, beating frantically at his clothes with his left hand and clutching his eyes with another. Some Aurors half-heartedly sent a retaliatory barrage of curses, but most of them began the process of casting powerful shielding charms and temporary rune wards as they realised that their opponents were a lot more powerful than they had thought.

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In that time, both Bowden and Davis had snuck to the ground floor and attacked the Aurors from behind. Davis was very precise in his attack as he sent a rapid salvo of powerful and quick-casting stunning hexes towards the exposed backs. Several Aurors crumpled and fell to the ground underneath a flash of crimson magic. Bowden was a little less subtle and she raised her wand and bellowed out a powerful incantation. A flash of lightning shot from her wand, as big as her arm, cackling and sizzling in the air as it lanced forward in a blink of an eye. It struck an area of bare ground around six Aurors and for a single-second; it looked as if the spell had missed. But as the Aurors spun around, from that ground, a dome of brilliant electricity rose up, which spat and hissed out as it lanced out towards the Aurors. Wands exploded and Aurors were ensnared in the powerful lightning trap, jerking in seizure-like movements as they were electrocuted. Bowden grinned triumphantly as she ducked underneath a powerful piercing curse, the glowing yellow arrowhead missing her head by millimetres as it flew past, while Davis continued to cast stunning charms, two every second. Aurors were revived



and reawakened, only to have to revive the person who had revived them. Immediately afterwards, they would be stunned again. It was chaos.

For ten seconds, there was complete anarchy amongst the Auror's as both Kingsley and Harry's group sent another barrage of powerful curses. This time, some Aurors were too slow and were struck by these curses. One of them was blown off his feet and sailed through the air, slamming onto the back wall at a speed of five metres per second. Another one of them screamed in agony as every single bone in his was broken simultaneously, before he fell to the ground, his eyes staring unblinkingly open as his spinal cord was snapped. One of the Auror's simply exploded. It was a grizzly sight as blood sprayed all over his companions. The powerful blasting spell disintegrated most of the body mass but a single and despoiled arm, the hand still clutching the wand, fell to the ground with a mist of red pulp. The last Auror to be struck seemed to be fine as the powerful curse seeped into him. He looked vaguely confused before he suddenly stated to pat down his body with his hands. His robes began to smoke and the man looked at his comrades, horrified. His mouth opened to scream and suddenly a glaring yellow-red glow emanated from his open mouth. It happened with his nostrils, ears and eyes as well and the man just stood still as the something inside of him glowed violently, before he simply became a column of roaring flames. His robes and wand were engulfed in the flames while his companions shied away from the searing heat, before the flames died down. There was no trace left of the Auror, not even ash.

However, it was only a matter of seconds before the Auror's reorganised themselves and leapt into a back-to-back formation, facing both Kingsley's group and Harry's group, and the two man party consisting of Davis and Bowden, who suddenly found themselves under attack. Curses soared over their heads as they both ducked, but the ground exploded and was ripped apart by a stray blasting curse, forcing them to move to avoid a deadly barrage of stone splinters, which whipped through the air. Davis leapt out of the way but Bowden grunted in pain as one of the splinters sliced deep into her cheek. Immediately, blood began to well as Bowden whipped out her wand and summoned a corporeal shield, much like the ones used in the Middle Ages, which covered her arm and protected her face and body. Davis summoned a gleaming globe of bronze magic and flicked his wand, intending to send a curse back at the Auror's. However, a powerful slicing curse ripped through it and struck Davis in the leg. He screamed in agony as it sliced in deep, stopping half-way through the bone, and fell to the ground as his leg gave way.

This was when Harry moved. Levelling his wand at the ground just next to the Auror rank facing him, he took a few steps backwards before running from the cell and off the pathway while muttering the incantation.

*"Oicca!"*

It was a good three metres drop but as Harry jumped off the balcony, he was instantly pulled towards that particular section of the ground. He had created that spell, which was simply the opposite of the summoning charm. Instead of summoning an item towards you, *it* summoned you towards it.

One of the Aurors was quick enough in shaking off his surprise and slashed his wand through the air, roaring an incantation and levelled his wand towards Harry. From the tip of his wand came a thin sleet of flames, which shot towards Harry and completely enveloped him. Harry suddenly became a flying fireball as another sleet of flames was surrounded him, but landed gracefully on the ground and stepped out of the flames calmly, which flickered and died as he did so. With movements too fast to be properly seen, Harry did a broad underarm flourish from his left to right and released his magic. Power roared through the air as suddenly the first half of the row were ripped from their feet by a wave of power and were thrown carelessly away. It was as if they had been struck by a trolls club as they flew through the air, slamming into the walls, pathways and floor. Bones snapped and Aurors screamed. Some struck the ground with a hard thud and didn't move again, while others feebly tried to stand up.

While they were trying to, Harry had entered the Auror ranks and had broken their formation. It was utter chaos as he let loose another broad sweep of his wand, sending four more Auror's flying away. Less than a second later, he had thrust his wand to the end of the ranks where a cluster of three Auror's stood and launched a glowing orb of brilliant white light at them. It rocketed through the air and exploded in a bright flash in between them. The pure force generated by this spells pushed the Auror's back with incredible strength, sending them flying off their feet as they clutched their blinded eyes.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* One of the other Auror's bellowed with a tinge of desperation in his voice. From the tip of his wand came a fatal jet of glowing green magic, which lanced through the air towards Harry, who sidestepped gracefully in the nick of time as it soared past his shoulder. He could feel the noxious aura of death and decay radiating off the curse and settling in on him. The robes he wore would smell like this curse for a very long time, perhaps even years, for that was the sheer deadliness and power of that curse.

Harry swiped his wand through the air, anger on his face and adrenaline pumping through his veins as he fought to clamp down his emotions, bringing his Occlumency shields to bear and suppressing his thoughts. The rage still pumped in his veins but he ignored it as he coolly killed the Auror who had cast the Unforgivable at him with a flash of silver light and a spray of blood. Around him, the other members of the Order of Phoenix charged into the fray, their wands bursting with quickly cast curses as they burst past the crippled Auror formations.

The next few minutes were a blur to everybody fighting. Harry was constantly moving, his wand causing more damage than any other as he ended life with

short sharp jabs and slow sweeping swishes. Streaks of light blasted into stone floor and walls and chips and splinters of rocks shot everywhere. Dust fluttered from the walls and the high ceiling and the metal walkways rattled loudly. Harry could see Kingsley duelling with three Aurors, the dark-skinned Auror flicking his wand violently as he sparred with them. An Auror nearby fell to a powerful beam of cackling orange light, convulsing madly on the ground, and Woods entered his line of sight, smirking arrogantly as he turned to another Auror, his mocking duelling style present in his poise.

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Harry whirled around to deflect a nasty ray of fiery red and orange magic and sent a hail of shiny glowing needle-thin spikes back at the Auror, who rolled to the side and sprang up again. Before they could continue this fight, another Order member leapt into view, Joseph, and blasted off a flash of dark green light. The Auror dodged that as well and turned to face the new threat, while Harry did the same as another Auror tried to challenge him. There was no order in this fight; it wasn't two opposing lines blasting curses at each other from different sides. Rather each man and woman, Auror or Order, was surrounded by both friend and foe and was fighting desperately to regain control. The Aurors suffered grievously against the powerful, skilled and combat ready Order teams, but they inflicted some damage. Harry saw Collins, a member of Kingsley's team, fall to the ground with the life fleeing his already darkening eyes as his throat was torn open. An albino Order member screamed in pain as her shoulder was torn to shreds. Kingsley grunted in pain as something sliced into his ribs. Joseph was limping even more heavily than he usually did, his knee bleeding profusely. Davis was still on the ground, his face white with pain as his blood streamed from his wounded leg, despite the conjured bandages, waving his wand whenever he could.

Suddenly, it was all over. Most of the Aurors were on the ground, most of them unconscious but several of them were dead. Harry was panting slightly, his wand clasped tightly in his hand. The ground was soaked in dark crimson blood, seeping into the rocks and staining the robes of those who had fallen. For a second, the group just surveyed the carnage that they had been a part of with aged eyes. Nobody spoke and the only sound that could be heard was the shrill alarms, which continued to blare. It was that because of that sound that Harry snapped back into action, suppressing all emotion and reorganising his thoughts.

"Kingsley, casualties," He said roughly as he strode through the battlefield, taking care not to step on any of the bodies as he approached the leader of the fourth raiding team, who was taking a quick examination of all Order members.

"Collins is dead," Kingsley said grimly, wiping grime made from a mixture of blood and dust from his face. He gestured to the albino woman, whose name was Ellie, and grimaced at the sight. Bowden was kneeling next to the prone woman, blood leaking from a deep cut on her cheek. She looked bleak as she

expertly ran her wand over the wounded and unconscious woman and gave a small shrug.

"The girl's got a deep shoulder wound," Bowden said quickly, gesturing to the bloody hear that had once been a shoulder. "Unconscious from the pain, I suspect."

"Revive her," Harry ordered curtly. "Give her pain suppressant potions,"

Bowden nodded and started on her work while Harry looked over his people. Joseph's bad knee, damaged long ago by dark magic, was bleeding slightly, but it was probably the old wound that had reopened. Davis was struggling to stand, blood slowly leaking down his leg as he leant on a conjured walking stick, panting heavily. His face was white with pain but his eyes were determined. Haldeman had a large burn on his left hand and was cradling it mournfully but he seemed to have no other injuries. Apart from the various cuts and bruises and minor wounds, they were the majority of the team's injuries.

"Jordan, how are the children?" Harry called and from across the room, Jordan appeared with the two children in tow. She wisely stood in front of them and blocked their vision of the bloodbath and smoothed down her robes. Her green eyes were cold and hard as she surveyed the dead Aurors, before swinging her eyes back towards Harry.

"They're fine. A few Aurors bore down on my position, but my lackey's took care of them. Unfortunately, they died in the process." Jordan answered, not really sounding upset, referring to the Aurors under the Imperius Curse.

Harry nodded and frowned as the alarm continued to blare. "Kingsley, take Haldeman and Robert, you take post and make sure the boathouse is secure. Bowden, you stay further behind them and move Davis and Ellie out along with the children. Woods, you're with me and Jordan. We'll watch your backs." He ordered. Lowering his voice, he leaned in closer to Bowden. "Transfigure Collins into something that's easy to carry,"

Bowden nodded solemnly and flicked her wand. Ellie and Davis slowly levitated off the blood-soaked rock and began to float towards the open doors, which revealed a cobbled stone path that would lead directly to the boathouse. Jordan ushered the children towards the doors, making sure that they didn't glance back, while Kingsley, Robert and Haldeman strode quickly past Bowden, Robert easily able to keep up even with his limp.

Woods stood nearby and Harry waited for Jordan to return. When she did, Harry counted to twenty in his head before raising his wand.

*"Eternusflammas!"* He chanted softly, and the phoenix mark flickered brightly as it was summoned above the ground floor, casting an eerie glow. He turned to his companions, who were bathed under the fiery red of the phoenix and the pale blue of the background. "That should be long enough."

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A mere thirty seconds later after Harry had left the ground floor, two dozen robed figures suddenly appeared in the middle of the still battlefield without a noise. The alarm continued to blare as they fanned out, stepping over broken bodies and pools of blood. One of the Death Eater's flicked their wand and the alarm suddenly cut out. They all wore black hooded robes and a smooth white mask hid their facial features, leaving only slits for eyes and two small holes for the nostrils. They were Death Eaters, the most powerful and skilled wizards and witches in the Dark Lord's service. Most of them had been recruited from the Aurors, but there were some Death Eaters who had been alive in their Master's first rise. One of those Death Eaters was Bellatrix Lestrange, who was currently staring at the large fiery Phoenix Mark with a look of utter rage and fury on her face.

"He...He...How dare...that mud blood filth desecrates..." She spluttered, madness flicking in her eyes. Words seemed to escape her as she glanced around, disdainfully brushing aside the wounded and dead bodies that littered the ground around her and focussing on the blood-soaked stones and the damaged walls. She was shuddering madly as her Death Eater's formed a perimeter around her, their wands clasped in steady hands as they waited for any sign of movement. Suddenly one of the doors opened slightly and somebody peeked out. Bellatrix whirled around, her lavender eyes glowing with rage as a bloodied and limping Auror hobbled over to the Death Eaters, relief plain on his face.

"Thank the Dark Lord you've arrived!" He gushed, almost sobbing with relief. "There were so many of them, we couldn't hold them back!"

"What's your name?" A woman Death Eater barked roughly, jabbing her wand in the Aurors direction.

"Augustus, Augustus Antherill," The Auror answered in a hoarse voice, his relieved smile suddenly falling at the hostility he was meeting.

"Augustus..." Bellatrix hissed and the Death Eater's parted to reveal her. Augustus swallowed in fear and his eyes widened dramatically. He opened and closed his mouth wordlessly as Bellatrix stalked forward, almost gliding across the ground as she approached.

"My Lady Bellatrix," The man eventually got out.

"How many people were attacking you?" Bellatrix queried quietly, almost kindly, but the malicious and ever-burning flames of rage never left her eyes and her smile resembled a snarl of animalistic lunacy.

"T-There were a-at least forty of them," The man stuttered fearfully, his eyes wide with panic. Bellatrix didn't say a word but the woman Death Eater who had questioned the Auror before stepped forward, her blue eyes probing the Aurors unblinkingly. The Auror stared back at the Death Eater without a word, his eyes vacant and lost as his mind flashed the horrible battle beforehand. He shivered uncontrollably as the Death Eater turned towards Bellatrix.

"He's lying. I can see it in his mind...there were ten at most. When the Aurors began to lose the battle, this one hid." She told the regal woman, with a note of derision in her voice. "And..."

"Ten?" Bellatrix interrupted coldly, her voice no louder than a whisper. "Only ten? You lost to a force of ten when you tripled their numbers? You fled rather than serve you Lord with honour and obedience?"

"My Lady..." The Auror half-sobbed, half pleaded, reaching out to her with a shaky hand as she raised her wand. She made no noise but from the tip of her wand came a curse of utter decay and putridness, a splotchy sickly green, pasty brown and slimy purple streak of dim light, which struck the Auror and seeped into his very body. The Auror gagged and retched, bringing up his dinner as he doubled over. His skin began to darken to a rotten black colour, his hair falling out in clumps and his eyes turning a sickly green. The Auror screamed in absolute agony as his body began to rot away from the inside. No Death Eater turned aside as Bellatrix watched with an orgasmic pleasure as the Auror died, slowly and painfully, his body withering away like a plant left out in the sun.

"My lady..." The female Death Eater began, and Bellatrix gave a wordless snarl and tore herself away from her entertainment.

"You dare interrupt me?" She spat out menacingly, her voice raspy and hollow.

The Death Eater seemed to shrink as Bellatrix towered over her, but held firm and swallowed nervously, licking her lips from behind her mask.

"My Lady, Harry Potter was here. I saw him in the Auror's memories," The Death Eater said.

Bellatrix froze in her paths, an indescribable look of dark emotion washing over her features.

The Death Eater continued, gesturing to the large Phoenix Mark. "That was done only two minutes ago, My Lady. Potter and his men went outside afterwards. If

the emergency wards were activated, then he may still be on the island. There would be only one way to get off, and that would from the..."

"Boathouse," Bellatrix finished, her eyes wide as a sudden eagerness entered them. She concentrated and swirled around, apparating away. Seconds later, two dozen Death Eaters followed her in a volley of cracks and pops.

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Bellatrix reappeared at the boathouse, where five Aurors lay on the ground near a stack of crates. The large building was empty but Bellatrix saw a small vessel moving rapidly away from the pier. Several people were seated in it but one man was standing up, facing Bellatrix. Even in the poor light, Bellatrix recognised Harry Potter and let out a piercing howl, her scarred throat burning painfully as she raised her wand as she sprinted up the long wooden pier, trying to get close enough.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" She screamed with all her hatred. Her wand buckled and she stumbled back as a roaring jet of green light erupted from her wand, lancing towards the standing man, who ducked gracefully. The killing curse soared above him, its intense radiance casting an unnatural light on the boat as it passed. Potter stood up gracefully again and flicked his wand. A roar of power surged from it, so powerful that Bellatrix could feel it from the pier, and suddenly a huge glistening wall of water burst from the ocean. It was five metres high and two metres thick and distorted through it was Potter.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" Bellatrix screamed again. The killing curse soared gracefully through the air and struck the wall of water. There was a loud boom as part of the water wall burst apart with the force of a geyser, but more water simply filled its spot as the killing curse faded, the sense of death lingering on.

Bellatrix heard dozens of apparition cracks behind her and turned around, her eyes gleaming madly. "Curse the boat! Curse it!"

The woman Death Eater was the first to step forward, raising her wand instantly. "*Avada Kedavra!*"

Another jet of green light soared through the air from the tip of the woman's wand, while other Death Eaters stepped forward. Incantations rang through the air and wild dark magic was rampant as a flurry of curses flew towards the now distant boat. Magic cackled in the air, dark sparks flaring to life as they struck one another, as the curses struck the wall of water, which absorbed most of the curses with a wet slurp. Some curses struck it and damaged it, large goblets of water exploding from the thick watery barricade, while one red curse simply entered the boat and left, zooming past the glistening wall of water and rocketing towards the boat.

But the boat crew simply deflected it with powerful shielding charms, sending the bright red streak of magic spiralling away with ease. The wall of water suddenly fell as Potter left the maximum casting range but as Bellatrix prepared to cast another powerful curse, a cone of tightly suppressed wind and fire roared through the air from the boat. Bellatrix froze for a split-second before she apparated from the pier. Most of the Death Eater's followed her example in the five seconds it took for the cone of fiery red and arctic white sparkling magic to travel the distance. Two Death Eaters threw themselves off the wooden pier as the cone connected. Instantly, the pier end exploded in a loud thundering ball of flames and shattered wood. Powerful conjured winds fuelled the flame as it ate away at the planks, ripping through the pier wood easily. The flames were partially quenched and rendered harmless a few seconds later by several powerful extinguishing spells and flame-freezing charms, but by then the boat had left the prison wards and when Bellatrix was able to banish away the smoke, it was empty.

She stood in the same spot for several minutes, not moving a single muscle, while her brain conjured fantasies of her plans for Potter, weaving in her rage, pain and insanity. The Death Eaters shuffled uncomfortably on the spot, recognising their leader's mood, and stayed silent, until somebody apparated into the boathouse. Wands flew up and curses were ready to fly, but it was a simple green-cloaked Auror with a scroll of parchment in his hand. He looked absolutely terrified as if he had just encountered the devil but he passed the scroll with shaking hands to the female Death Eater, who read it quickly and sucked in a breath, and apparated away.

"My Lady?" She ventured carefully.

Bellatrix whirled around, ready to curse the one who dared disturb her, but froze as the Death Eater continued.

"My Lady, there is a message from the Ministry. The Dark Lord wished to see you tomorrow, at nine o'clock sharp."

Bellatrix could feel her heart pumping furiously as her eyes went wide. There was only one thing that could make Bellatrix feel fear, and that was the wrath of her Master. Surely he had not heard of the raid on Morsmordre yet? She mentally shook herself, of course he had. The Dark Lord knew all. She could only hope to explain her failure before the Dark Lord punished her. She wanted to scream in rage and frustration at Potter, and wanted to beg and plead because of the Dark Lord. She did neither.

"Thankyou Avery," She replied in a raspy tone, her throat aching painfully.

Avery bowed deeply and stood back as Bellatrix walked forward, aware of the eyes of her servants upon her. As she began issuing orders and instructions, her



mind wandered to her summons. What would the Dark Lord do to her? A grimace of madness and fear flickered over her face but she suppressed it as she sent her Death Eaters away with various tasks. It was going to be a long night.

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## ***Morsmordre Prison Attacked!***

### ***Dangerous Prisoners freed! Aurors brutally murdered!***

*By special correspondent Maria Skeeter*

*Department of Media Affairs*

*Last night, the Order of Phoenix, led by Harry Potter, performed a vicious assault on the Ministry prison facility on Morsmordre Island, freeing over seven dangerous criminals and murdering over fifteen Aurors. The renegade wizards entered the facility on a supply boat and subdued the guards patrolling the docks, before gaining entrance to the prison and breaking out seven people accused of treason against the Ministry of Magic. While doing so, Harry Potter personally visited the Auror quarters and brutally hacked away fifteen Aurors with powerful dark magic while they were sleeping. Minutes later, when vigilant Aurors discovered the break-in, the Order fled the prison with their prisoners. In the following battle, three Aurors and eight Order members were slain, before Harry Potter escaped using the supply boat he had arrived in.*

*The Ministry of Magic is in an uproar over the incident and the public is pressuring them to do something about terrorist group that has stricken fear into the hearts of wizards and witches worldwide.*

*"I can't get to sleep at night, I'm too afraid to go outside, I won't let my children Floo without an adult...it just has to stop!" said a sobbing witch, who wished to remain anonymous.*

*"The only good thing about last night was that members of that filthy Order were killed," sneered a patriotic citizen, who also wished to remain anonymous.*

*The Ministry has released a statement early this morning, given by Head of the Department of Media Affairs, Malcolm Bulstrode.*

*"Rest assured that this heinous crime will not go unpunished! As we speak, the Ministry is hard at work on several operations that will ensure the demise of the hated Order of Phoenix. We at the Ministry would also like to console the families who lost a loved one in the massacre last night. Rest assured for the Ministry will avenge them! Until then, I urge citizens to remain calm and cautious. Go about your daily business but if you see anything suspicious, anything at all, contact the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Every report will be taken seriously*

*and Aurors will arrive at your location in minutes to investigate. We will keep you safe from the evil of Harry Potter!"*

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*Note 1: In case people don't remember, Isabel was one of the Muggleborns that was stuck with Jordan.*

*Note 2: I've had a few people comment that it's disconcerting to see so many OC characters. Let me make it clear that most of them don't play any large part in this story. Only one or two will, the rest are just there.*

*Note 3: This chapter is dedicated to Nonjon, who long ago told me that nobody had ever given negative review about too much action. I took that as a challenge and this story will be an example!*

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Isabel shivered as she stared from the window of her dormitory from Azkaban, watching the swirling waves of fog pound drop past the walls. She had not been able to get to sleep last night, partly due to a coldness, which had persisted despite the large amount of blankets she had wrapped herself in, but mostly because she couldn't stop the events of yesterday replaying through her mind. Never before had she experienced such violence before. Even the TV shows that she had watched hadn't prepared her for the realities of a real fight. Then there was magic...magic!

At first, when Isabel had been kidnapped on her way home from school a little over two weeks ago, she thought that the weirdly-dressed men and woman were part of a cult of sorts. They had taken her aside and briefly told her that she was under arrest for "Improper Magical Use of Lesser Bloods", and then all she remembered was a flash of red light until she had awoken in her cell. She had tried to plead with the occasional patrolling guard, tried to ask them what her crime was. She demanded to know where her parents were and informed them that she knew her rights and was allowed a phone-call and an attorney. The guard had laughed at her mockingly and smirked at her disdainfully. She still remembered his words.

"Listen up Mudblood. As of now, you don't have any rights, you don't have any power, and you are ours to do with what we wish! You are Muggle scum; filthy tainted blood runs through your veins! You're an abomination and a freak! If you keep your mouth shut and your ugly face down, you might live to be exiled. If you don't..."

Isabel shivered again and this time it had nothing to do with the cold. Her teeth chattered as she moved away from the window, huddling deeper into the blanket around her shoulders as she sank down into the cushy armchair. Despite the forbidding appearance of Azkaban, her room was painted with a warm red. She had a king-sized bed with ten fluffy pillows, a bookcase filled to the brim with

books and an adjacent bathroom. There was also a shielded niche in the stone walls, not too dissimilar to a fireplace. There were only a few fireplaces in Azkaban to reduce the risk of the Ministry gaining access to Azkaban by Floo. Instead, Azkaban used Gubraithian fire, also known as Everlasting Fire, for heat and warmth and blocked out the smoke using weak rune-enhanced shields.

Suddenly there was knock on the door and Isabel started, her green eyes glinting with fear as the door opened. A rather average sized woman with bushy brown hair and warm eyes peered in and smiled in a friendly way when she spotted Isabel.

“Good morning,” She said briskly, a touch of sternness and warmth in her voice. “I’m Professor Hermione Granger, Head of Educational Affairs. You must be Isabel Lovell.”

Isabel hesitantly nodded, some of her fear ebbing away as the woman smiled. She wasn’t acting like any of the other robed figures she had seen before, not like that cruel and sneering Auror’s and definitely not like the battle-hardened and rough fighters that had stolen her away.

“W-Where am I?” She asked softly.

“You’re in Azkaban, the last free fortress against Lord Voldemort.” Professor Granger replied, just as softly. “We rescued from a prison, where you were sentenced to be executed.”

Isabel’s mind whirled. She knew that the guards hadn’t liked her or any of the other prisoners, but they were going to *kill* her? What had she done? Why would they want? She opened her mouth to ask these questions when the woman raised a hand.

“I understand that you have many questions that you would like answered, and there’ll be time for them later. Firstly, we have to hurry. The tour is almost ready to leave.”

“Tour?” Isabel asked curiously, walking forward as Professor Granger gestured her out of her room and into the murky grey stone halls.

“Of course,” Professor Granger said, a small smile curving on her lips. “After all, you’re going to need to know about your new home.”

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At the same time in a location far away, Bellatrix Lestrange shivered violently as she stood in the darkened corridor outside a large set of pure silver-wrought doors. She had been waiting for fifteen minutes, and as each second ticked on, Bellatrix grew more and more agitated and worried. She was not alone in the

darkened corridor. Two hardened and extremely loyal Death Eater's stood guard, gazing at her impassively at either side of the closed doors, each holding a slim wooden staff. Each staff had a gemstone at the tip, which glowed with flickering chaotic and dark power.

Normally Bellatrix wouldn't even dream of showing as much fear or doubt in front of any Auror or Death Eater, but these Death Eater's were little better than puppets. Their minds had been stripped away and their personalities destroyed. Only the unquestionable loyalty and desire to serve the Dark Lord had been left, and each Death Eater would die for the Dark Lord without a moment's hesitation, should it be that the Dark Lord came under attack or even if he just asked it of them.

Suddenly one of the Death Eater's started. The tip of his staff flickered as suddenly a tiny thin beam of white lanced from the tip and into his skull. The Death Eater cocked his head as he listened to the transmitted message and stepped forward, his blank eyes gazing at her without emotion.

"The All-Powerful Dark Lord of the Isles commands you to enter. He is waiting for you." The Death Eater said emotionlessly. He gestured Bellatrix to move forward and raised his staff. He slammed it down onto the ground and the doors slowly creaked open. "Go forward."

Bellatrix swallowed her rising fear and stepped hesitantly through the doors into the pitch black room. As she moved unsteadily forward, her eyes straining against the darkness, she felt a wave of coldness wash over her as her Lord's power swept through the room. She took a hesitant step forward and gave a yelp as she felt her foot come down on the edge of a drop. She wavered, her arms flailing as she took a step back. Her heart was racing and sweat was dripping off her forehead as she took another unsteady step forward. For a moment she longed to use her wand. A simple *Lumos* would have been sufficient, but nobody dared use their wand in front of the Dark Lord without permission, and Bellatrix knew with certainty that the Dark Lord was watching her.

After a few minutes of fumbling around in the dark, Bellatrix took a deep breath and dropped to her knees.

"Master, I know that I have displeased you. My only wish is that I may face you, so that I can beg for your mercy and compassion. Have I not always been loyal?" She pleaded with a faint sense of hope and despair.

The darkness throbbed against her and from its depths came a hissing reply.

"Stand Bellatrix, and come forward."

Bellatrix did as she was told without a moment's hesitation. She took a step forward and stumbled as her foot found air. She gave a short scream of panic as she lost her balance against the edge of the drop and tumbled in. Air roared in her ears as she dropped, her eyes wide open with panic. She wanted to scream, she wanted to cry, she wanted to laugh with relief that it was all over, she wanted to beg for mercy, but she did none of those things. As resignation crept over her, she suddenly saw a prick of light in the distance. Her eyes fixated on it as she flew closer and closer towards it. It became brighter and brighter, until it was just in front of her and suddenly she hit it. She got a flash of a small room with blazing torches as she dropped to the ground with great speed, spanning the height of the room in seconds. Just as she was about to slam into the ground, she stopped, held in the air by a powerful force. She continued to hover above the ground for a few seconds, before the invisible force let her go and she dropped the last few centimeters and hit the cold stone floor. She immediately picked herself up and prostrated herself towards the direction of her Master, her head lowered submissively towards the ground.

"Master!" She breathed.

"Rise Bellatrix," Came a cold and silky high-pitched voice. Bellatrix lifted herself from her knees and dared to meet the eyes of her Lord. Clad in ebony robes of the finest silks with green and silver threads, Lord Voldemort was an impressive figure of darkness. His skin was pale; his head was bald and covered by a hood with an ornately stitched Dark Mark. His crimson eyes burned with an intensity and magic that Bellatrix had only seen on two other people before. His pale fingers were wrapped around a yew wand, idly tapping away at the wood as he sat in a grand throne made of rare gleaming metals and precious gemstones. His nose-less nostrils flared as he regarded Bellatrix with what seemed like a look of fondness.

Over to the side, a group of nine people moved hurriedly around a large table. They muttered softly to one another as they worked diligently. Bellatrix recognized some of the people as powerful Auror Commanders, some who she shared a rivalry with. But none of them would dare mention her prostrating and submission. It didn't matter whatever disagreements people had, anything that happened in the Dark Lord's presence was, by a mutual unspoken understanding, never touched upon.

"Bellatrix, I hear that you have had problems regarding Morsmordre Isle?" Voldemort hissed softly, his emotions hard to decipher by his silky tone.

"Yes Master," Bellatrix responded, flinching slightly. "Harry Potter himself broke past the defenses and retrieved several Mudblood's and Blood-traitors."

"You seem to be upset in delivering this news to me," Voldemort observed. His eyes gleamed with amusement. "Am I right?"

"I am Master, for I have failed you." Bellatrix said miserably.

Voldemort laughed a high-pitched cruel laugh that echoed in the large chamber. He seemed to find something amusing for he continued laughing for some time, before he let his laughter die away.

"Oh Bella," He said, almost kindly. "You have done anything but. When I received news that Morsmordre had been attacked, I was extraordinarily pleased."

"Master?" Bellatrix whispered in confusion.

Voldemort ignored her unspoken question and stood up, waving his arms and gesturing to his surroundings. "Do you not wonder where we are Bella?"

"I do Master, but to ask you would be imprudent and disrespectful," Bellatrix replied.

Voldemort smiled at her fondly. "You are indeed my most loyal," He said and Bellatrix flushed with pleasure at her Master's approval. "To answer my own question, we are in a small room deep in the Ministry. It is by far the most protected and secure rooms that I possess. The men you see working do not leave here, and should the operation they work on be discovered, they and their families will surely die. Can you guess what Operation we are working on?"

"Operation Evinco!" Bellatrix whispered with wonderment. "Master, is it...?"

"Yes Bellatrix, it has started." Voldemort hissed softly. "Within a fortnight, I am certain that Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix will be dead, and Azkaban will be ours."

"Master, I know of the basic details, but I beg of you, tell me of your genius!" Bellatrix pleaded with reverence and pleasure.

When Voldemort told her the full details of the plan, she laughed madly. Her insane cackles bounced across the room and the men shuddered as she did not stop laughing, tears of pleasure falling down her cheeks as she withered on the ground. Her mouth began to froth and she still laughed, howling with glee and dark pleasure and thrashing violently on the ground as insanity burned into her mind.

Above stood Lord Voldemort, her crimson eyes flaring slightly as he smiled coldly at what he had just revealed. Inside, he was laughing much like Bellatrix was. It was almost over. Soon, the Order would be crushed and then the true extent of his plans would be unleashed. Soon, the world would be his.

“I want a raid launched on Azkaban,” He ordered out loud. “Send in a battalion of Auror’s and a squad of Battle Trolls for ground support, and a division of the Aerial squadron. Tell them to target the eastern tower.”

The Auror Commanders near him scurried away to do his bidding, never questioning the fact that the raid was doomed from the beginning. If Lord Voldemort wished Azkaban to be attacked, then it will be attacked.

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Isabel walked through several large stone hallways as Professor Granger led her away from her rooms. Each hallway, unlike her own room, was coloured in murky grey and seemed depressing and cold. Robed guards dressed in a dirty brown stood at attention at every corner, their wands clasped tightly in their hands and their eyes firm. Isabel shivered as one of them raked their eyes over her, searching her suspiciously until Professor Granger moved on. Finally, after five minutes of walking, Granger led Isabel into a large room and she gasped in awe.

This room, unlike the hallways, resembled her room. It was painted in the same warm red. Large fires blazed with heat in large niches in the walls, flickering white shields holding back the billows of smoke. A long table stood in the room, covered in steaming hot foods, while three dozen armchairs lay around the table. These chairs were occupied by several laughing and chatting children, some as young as six, others as old as seventeen. But every so often, one of them would look up and just gaze at the roof in awe, much like Isabel was doing at that very moment.

On the roof, projected by powerful magic, was a picture of a large phoenix in flight, identical to the one used in the Order Raids. Red and yellow glowing plumage shone against the backdrop of clear blue sky. Clouds drifted by every few seconds, small fluffy white patches in the background, while the Phoenix flapped its enormous wings against an unseen wind, its black eyes wide open. It opened its glowing beak to let out a soundless cry, and a wave of courage and comfort swept across the room, washing over those inside and sweeping away their fear, panic and anxiety.

Isabel didn’t know how long she stood there, staring at the beautiful and fiery bird, until she felt a wave of power sweep across the room as a man entered. She automatically shifted her gaze and saw the man who had led her from the prison standing at the door, his green eyes glinting behind a pair of silver glasses. He was dressed in dark robes, like Professor Granger had been, but his were trimmed with silver. A pleasant smile was plastered on his face as he walked forward, his dark cloak flowing against an unseen wind.

“My name is Harry Potter, and I am the Commander of Azkaban, the island you are currently standing on.” He introduced himself quietly. Isabel watched as he reached into his robes and pulled out a small shiny stick and winced at the very



sight of it. She knew what those things were capable of, and seeing the collective flinches or nervous looks, she knew she wasn't the only one. The man, Harry, didn't seem to notice and waved it, mumbling a phrase. Isabel frowned, picking up the Italian-sounding syllables, and blinked in surprise as a plushy armchair suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Harry placed his wand away and sat down, resting his hands on the armrest. Isabel watched him carefully, oblivious to the commotion made by those who hadn't seen as much magic as she had.

"If you could all sit down, I can begin explaining what exactly has happened to you and why you are in considerable danger." Harry said with a hint of unquestionable command in his voice. Isabel found herself seeking out an armchair and absently sitting down, her eyes never leaving Harry's form. After everybody had been seated, Harry waved Professor Granger away and regarded the children in front of him with a mixture of pity and kindness

"You have all been rescued from an unjust imprisonment given to you by the Ministry of Magic. Let me make it clear to you that in Britain at this very moment, there are two societies. One of these societies is the one you are from, a society of technology, also known as the Muggle World. The other is a society of magic, hidden away from the society of technology long ago. This is commonly referred to as the Wizarding World."

"The Wizarding World is made up of three different types of magical people. There are the Pureblood's, who have been born from families where their parents are wizards and witches of long descent. There is the Half-Blood's, who are born from one magical parent and one non-magical parent. And there are people like you, magical people born from two non-magical parents, two Muggles. You are classed as Muggleborns."

"Normally you would have been invited to a magical school to harness and learn your gift, but currently the Wizarding World is at a state of war. Twenty-five years ago, a dark wizard by the name of Lord Voldemort overthrew our government and took control of the Ministry of Magic, the organisation that runs the Wizarding World. Lord Voldemort is a racist and believes that Muggles, those without magic, are inferior to Wizards. Furthermore, he believes that those born to Muggle parents are abominations and arrests those who show sign of magical ability and come from Muggle descent."

"So that's why they arrested us? Because we're...Muggleborns?" One of the teenage boys said hesitantly.

"Yes," Harry answered. "The only crime you committed was being born."

"That's not fair!" Isabel heard herself say softly, her mind ablaze with what she was hearing.

"You're right, it isn't fair." Harry agreed, his penetrating gaze swinging around to meet hers. "But there are few who resist him. Lord Voldemort is the magical equivalent to Hitler, and rules this country through fear and terror. The other Wizarding Nations leave him be and pray that one day, he doesn't invade them. I am the leader of the only group that fights back at Voldemort. We call ourselves the Order of Phoenix."

"Why did you rescue us?" An older girl with long blonde hair asked.

"You were all scheduled for torture and execution. The Order felt that we had to intervene to save your lives. Normally imprisoned Muggleborns like yourself are exiled from the country. This time, your fate was much worse." Harry answered.

A ripple went through the group as they processed this information. The people that had kidnapped them had been planning on murdering them. One of the younger children's eyes began watering and some of the older children just look stunned at the news.

"What happens now?" Isabel asked softly.

"You have three options." Harry answered and the group fell silent. "Firstly, we can send you to a safe country, where you will be given sanctuary and eventually find new homes and new friends. If it's possible, we can try to relocate your family as well. You don't have to associate with magic ever again. Secondly, you can stay here and we will teach you what we know of magic. Afterwards, you can leave for another country and take a job in another Wizarding community."

"What's the third option?" An acne-faced boy asked.

"You stay here and learn magic, and afterwards you join the Order of Phoenix and take up the fight. In the future there will be hundreds of people like you killed because of pathetic ideas about blood. I won't stop fighting until we're all free." Harry answered, determination ringing in his voice.

"Do we join as a soldier?" The same boy asked with a glint in his eyes.

"If you want," Harry answered. "But there are many jobs you can do that don't involve fighting. We need farmers for our crops, fishermen for our food, secretaries for our paperwork, analysts for our intelligence, Professors to teach other children, doctors and nurses for our sick and wounded, potion makers to create our potions, and so many other jobs."

"I'm in your Order," The boy said, a touch of bitterness in his voice as he continued. "They killed my parents because my dad didn't want them to take me. I want to fight."

"If that's what you want, then that's what you'll get." Harry said softly.

"I'll stay as well," A brunette girl, maybe sixteen, said with determination. "My brother's dead, and I want them to pay."

Harry raised a hand and silence fell upon the suddenly babbling and clamoring group. "Before you make any decisions, perhaps you should see, should you choose to stay, your new home."

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"These are our greenhouses." Harry informed the small group as he led them outside. The sun shone brilliantly down onto the ground and even though the island was surrounded by fog, the air was clean and fresh. Despite the gloomy exterior of the fortress, grass grew in neat trimmed patches around the small paved path. Seagulls cried out with mournful voices as they flapped against the light breeze and the soothing sound of waves breaking against rocks filled the air. The small courtyard led to two white small greenhouses located at the very back of the island. They had been built in a small dip in the land, as to better protect them.

"Inside, our farmers and horticulturists cultivate and grow enough food for the entire island population with plenty to spare." Harry said, continuing his walk down to the Greenhouses.

"Hang on, how many people live on the island?" One of the boys said suddenly.

"Including you, we have two-hundred and fifty seven." Harry answered.

"I only know a little about farming and stuff, but my Uncle's owns his own plantation, and you'll need a lot more greenhouses to begin feeding that many people." The boy argued.

Harry smiled mysteriously as the group approached the doors. Six brown robed guards stood at attention as he came closer, straightening their backs.

"Sir," One of them exclaimed and snapped a salute.

"Wilson," Harry greeted and returned the salute. "Just touring the warehouses."

"Yes sir!" The guard said and turned around. "Open the doors,"

Two of the guards withdrew wands and placed the tips in two small holes. Each of them muttered a different incantation and the doors creaked open as a tiny flash of light blasted from their wands and into the rune-sensors, which recognised the magical code.

Harry and the group entered the Greenhouse and the boy who had disagreed earlier dropped his mouth open in shock, his eyes bulging in their sockets at the scene that greeted him. Four large fields of crops greeted him, stretching on into the distance. Small buildings were clustered around each field, where two figures were levitating a bundle of crops to a wooden cart. Above, the greenhouse roof didn't appear to exist and the sun blared down peacefully onto the crops.

"That's impossible! All of this can't fit into one greenhouse!" One of the other teenagers gasped, while the younger children just looked around in awe.

"When it comes to magic, you'll find just how possible the impossible becomes." Harry said and smiled at the looks he received. To Isabel, it almost looked as if his eyes were twinkling for a second.

---

"These are our classrooms," Harry said quietly as he and the group stared through the windows of a small classroom, where nine students between the ages of nine and ten were frowning heavily and slowly waving their wands. Their Professor, a slim man with golden curls, was smiling widely as nine feathers hovered above the ground.

"They were like us once, weren't they?" A red-haired boy asked softly.

Harry frowned softly. "Actually, they are what you can become...if you try." He said. Suddenly the room shook as one of the feathers exploded in a burst of flames and a roar of wind. The student in question blinked in shock and wiped the soot from his face, while the Professor came forward as the rest of the class laughed.

"Do you have any older students?" Isabel asked.

Harry nodded and led them down the hall, where they stopped in front of another window. Isabel was surprised, though when she thought about it she shouldn't have been, to see Professor Granger lecturing a larger group of twenty students, all around about sixteen to nineteen.

"You said that there were soldiers," The acne-faced boy said eagerly. "Where are they?"

"You've seen most of them on guard duty, but I think that Ron has a small group out for training."

---

It was a place that had seen many battles. The grass was scorched and withered away, and the dirt was coarse and rough. Large chunks of stone, some as large

as a car, lay around the hundred-by-hundred meter field. In the middle, twelve people, six in purple robes and six in green, fought.

*"Stupefy!"* A purple robed figure hissed, aiming his wand around the rock he was crouching behind. A blast of red light streaked from his wand and slammed into the ground, meters away from the rapidly moving green-robed figure making his run forward, who dived behind another rock as a streak of silver coloured magic came his way from another purple-robed figure.

"They're coming in around the left!" A female purple-robe figure called out. She waved her wand violently, muttering something under her breath. An orb of sparkling blue magic grew in power at the tip of her wand, and she hurled it away from her. It flew above the rock she was crouching out and dropped behind another. There was a blue flash of magic and a grunt of pain as the orb exploded in a wave light, and the woman quickly moved forward, crawling behind the rocks to avoid the spell-fire commencing between the two teams. A green-robed member gave a cry of pain as he was blasted back by a well-placed disarming hex, while a purple-robed figure growled in irritation as his position was bombarded and ducked down. Chips of stone flew through the air as curses impacted on the giant stones, scorching the rock and blasting little chunks of them away.

The woman managed to make it to the group of rocks where she had hurled her spell at and quickly moved behind them, intent on subduing the enemy for good, but there was nobody there. She gasped and spun around, her wand flying up, only to meet a scarlet rocket of light and fall to the ground limply.

---

Nearby, the gathered crowd of children watched with interest and excitement and the battle drills the team of defenders was participating in. Behind them, Harry was talking softly with Ron, who was keeping an eye out on the mock-battle.

"Their performance is really improving," Ron was saying, when a red-faced guard rushed up.

"Sirs!" He panted loudly. "There's been a sighting."

"What?" Ron barked, scanning the sky with his eyes. "Air or sea?"

"Both!" The messenger replied quickly. Ron frowned and raised his wand, letting a shiny red spark fly into the air. The battle in front of them stopped as the purple and green robed figures paused in their fighting, reviving their comrades and helping each other up.

"We should..." Ron began, before a loud bell clanged from a tower, ringing loudly. The sound washed over Azkaban as a second one joined in, then a third, then a fourth. Guards rushed through the halls and onto the Battlements.

"You!" Harry barked at one of the purple-robed defenders. "Take this group of children to one of the shelters! The rest of you, get to your positions!"

As the defenders scurried into positions, Ron disappeared with a small pop, most likely heading towards the Command Centers. Harry concentrated and disappeared as well. He appeared in one of the Gate Towers, where five guards peered forward with omnioculars.

"Sir!" One of them barked, a grizzled graying man with a powerful gaze.

"What do we have?" Harry asked the man intently.

"Two boats and a flyer," The man answered. "They probably activated one of the Anti-Concealment mines. There are more we can't see. They'll become visible in a minute or so when they pass into the outer-wards."

"Alright. Stick to your posts, and send a message to the docks. Tell them to activate the Guardians and to fall back to the gates." Harry ordered.

"Yes sir!" The guard barked and saluted Harry as he disappeared.

---

He reappeared in the Command Center, which was in a flurry of activity. On one of the walls, a group of wizards stood around a gigantic map of Azkaban Island. A hundred or so named dots clustered around the center of the island, while a steady ring of named dots were lined up on the walls of the fortress.

Flying silver swirls of light were entering and leaving the room at a rapid pace as the analysts at the Center and the guards at the towers continually sent in and out reports and orders. Ron was in the center of it all, his scarred face twisted into an apprehensive grin.

"They've passed the Outer-wards...their concealment charms are failing!" A witch cried out, seconds after a swirl of light entered her head. A barrage of swirls suddenly entered the room and struck various people.

"We've got twelve plus boats!" One wizard cried out. "Maybe twenty people a boat!"

"A cluster of Flyers! Roughly thirty of them....latest model brooms!"

"Fuck! They have a dragon! They have a fucking dragon!"

"Another two boats coming...they're containing Battle Trolls! Two dozen of them!"

"How the hell did they find us?" Ron barked loudly, anger in his eyes. His face was pale and his hand was clutching his wand tightly.

"Could have been an aerial scout," Harry muttered softly.

Ron frowned and shook his head. "We have twenty flyers out patrolling everyday. We would have detected something, some form of residual magic."

"Sir? What are our orders?" A grey-robed witch asked loudly and the room fell silent.

"Scramble our Flyers, all of them." Ron ordered. "Tell them to intercept those incoming broomsticks!"

"Get two Riders out there; tell them to take out the Dragon!" Harry said quietly. "Send a squad of flyers to cover them."

"Tell the tower guards to begin staff bombardment and aerial defense." Ron commanded. "All guards should spread out along the battlements between the gates and the west and east tower."

There was a flurry of activity as a dozen swirls of light pulsed out of the room, gliding through walls and out towards their various targets. For a few seconds, there was complete silence in the room and all activity ceased. Harry waited calmly while Ron huffed impatiently, until a single swirl of light entered the room and struck the nearest analyst.

"Flyers are scrambled; riders will be out in a few minutes." The wizard reported.

"Sir!" One of the map-monitors called out. "The boats have landed."

"I'm going to take out a broom." Harry told Ron grimly. "Make sure that those Trolls are taken care of. I'll take care of the flyers."

"Good luck," Ron called as Harry disappeared.

---

Benjamin Nolan watched with a grim eye as his battalion of Auror's, numbered around two-hundred and fifty witches and wizards, leapt from the boats and onto the rocky docks. The fog pulsed around them, almost as if it was alive, and he shivered violently. But he did not let it affect him as he began barking out orders. Above his head, a division of flyers rocketed past him and higher up in the sky, a lumbering dragon swept its wings gracefully, manned by a single Death Eater.

The Dark Lord had commanded him to take this island, and by Merlin, he was going to try his hardest!



*Note: This chapter contains considerable violence and graphic descriptions.*

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"Trolls, front and centre!" Nolan ordered curtly. "Aurors, fall back behind them. Two meters spread, keep your wands up and your shield charms on your tongue!"

Twelve armoured Trolls lumbered forward, their clubs held high and their eyes blank. They had long ago been conditioned to serve as Auror heavy melee units and lived only to devote themselves towards the Dark Lord. They wore thick five-inch thick metal armour and large helmets which covered most of their face. Their clubs were a mixture between thick, strong wooden longs, for smashing down walls and thin spike-covered rails, for swiping at flyers. They all carried large shields, almost as big as the Troll itself, and each shield was enchanted and enhanced using powerful runes.

Two hundred and forty Auror's arranged themselves behind the Trolls, their Auror robes flapping madly in the wind. Most of them were shivering and wore determined yet resigned expressions. They knew that they were dead, that they couldn't win this battle. They also knew that death was a better alternative to what waited if they refused to participate. Two trolls tugged on thick ropes to drag a large clunky object of wheels forward.

"Aurors, forward march!"

---

High up on the western tower of Azkaban, Robin peered through her omnioculars and anxiously chewed on a strand of her hair as she watched the thick Auror formation lumber forward, led by powerful battle trolls. She put down the omnioculars and turned around to her partners, two who were fumbling with a heavy green staff and two who were holding a thin light-blue staff. The green staff was as thick and tall as a person and weighed over a hundred kilograms. It looked like a fat tree stump with a large jagged crystal inserted at the top.

"For Merlin's sake, do you have wands or not?" Robin snapped. The two men glanced sheepishly at each other and both let go of the Staff, which fell to the floor with a loud thump. A few seconds later, the staff was levitated to its designated position at the center of the tower, where a single ray of light shone onto it from a circular hole in the tower roof, roughly a meter in diameter.

"Step back, I'm going to activate it!" Robin warned and the two men hastily moved away as she waved her wand. The Staff crystal suddenly produced a weak light, which flickered dimly in the tower. However, the light was gradually getting stronger.

"Alright, Mathew, get me a position!" Robin snapped.

One of the men moved forward, grabbing a pair of omnioculars and peering down at the approaching column of Auror's. After a few seconds of observation and careful note taking, he dropped the omnioculars and turned back to Robin.

"I've got a set of initial co-ordinates!" He called.

"Alright, Richard and I will power the weapon. Ben, Simon; watch our backs and keep those flyers off our arse! Mathew, you'll give us the co-ordinates!"

"Let's do this!" Richard said and stepped forward into a small carved circle on the tower ground. Robin did the same on the opposite end of the staff, and together they raised their wands, leveled it at the staff, and bellowed an incantation. Instantly, the small circles glowed with an intense magical white light and from their wands came a continuous beam of glowing white energy. The air thrummed with magic and from the ground far below, one could see the windows of the tower glow with an intense light.

"Co-ordinates are....grid B, section 21!" Mathew called out.

Robin gritted her teeth as she poured her power into the weapon. The crystal head on the staff was building up in power, glowing brighter and brighter as it as fed by two beams of raw magic. Robin focused her mind and closed her eyes. Concentrating on the co-ordinates, she sent them to the staff, which had been 'programmed', for lack of a better word, to strike at various locations with different co-ordinates.

"Now!" Robin cried out and forcefully lowered her arm, ending the connection of raw magic. On the other side, Richard did the same and they both sagged back as the Staff hummed with repressed magic. Magic cackled around the crystal head, which glowed with a blinding intensity. Suddenly magic flowed through the crystal and erupted from the tip with a loud deep roar that echoed around the island. The magical burst blinded Robin as it rocketed upwards, past the circular hole in the roof and into the night sky.

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Nolan watched the four glowing towers, the west and east tower and the two gate towers, with apprehension as his column of men slowly moved forward. They had not encountered any resistance yet, either through guards or flyers. Their own flyers were flying up ahead in formation with the dragon. Suddenly the lights on the towers dimmed and almost dropped, before they suddenly flared up again. Benjamin could only watch with horror and surprise as a burst of glowing light erupted from each tower and shot up into the air, before pausing very abruptly,

“Merlin!” He whispered, as the large bursts of powerful magic suddenly rocketed at the Auror battalion. “Incoming!” He screamed loudly. “Trolls; shields up! Aurors; take cover!”

The Trolls quickly raised their shields and Auror’s dove to the ground, casting their own powerful shields. Hundreds of glowing bronze, gold, silver, blue and purple shields sprang into existence, forming a powerful defensive mesh around the large group that glittered brightly.

The streaks rocketed down and slammed into the shielded group. Two of them hit the shields of the Troll and two others slammed into the defensive net of shields. The ground rumbled and a loud concussion wave rang through the air as one of the Trolls’ shields exploded in a wave of searing white fire. The Troll roared in agony as the streak of light dove into his armour, searing past the inches of metal. The Troll dropped to his knees as the streak of light drove into his body, the intense heat boiling organs and blood. Steaming blood exploded from his ears and nostrils as the torso of the Troll literally exploded underneath the armour. The Troll collapsed onto the ground and didn’t move again.

The other Troll was luckier. The streak of searing white power slammed down onto his shield, but the shield held underneath the intense heat and magic. The Troll roared in anger and defiance as he strained his bulging muscles to hold his shield against the concentrated power. Sweat ran down its face, its bulging eyes glaring at the shield. The streak of light wavered and struggled against the powerful shield, fighting against the thick metal; inherit magic woven into the shield and a thin purple shield that hovered inches above the metal. The streak gave one final push and faded away as its magic dissipated.

The powerful barrage of streaks that struck the woven net of individual shielding charms was much more effective. One of them struck the net and slammed against it, exploding in a wave of magical sparks and searing white flames. Auror’s fell to the ground underneath the sheer force of the attack and the shield faltered, if only for a second. The second streak tore through the weakened shield and exploded in the middle of the Auror ranks. The ground rumbled and exploded in a geyser of dirt and rocks. Four Auror’s were instantly killed as a white ball of flames burst from the ground and enveloped them. Five other Auror’s screamed in agony as a searing heat washed over their exposed skin, and two others were cut down by the resulting shrapnel as it tore into their fragile bodies.

“Aurors, increase spread to four meters! Spread out...don’t give them a cluster to target!” Benjamin screamed out desperately. He raised his wand at the sky and let off a shower of dark brown sparks, just as the towers pulsed with light and sent out another wave of streaks. “Incoming!”

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High above in the sky, Warrington, leader of the Auror Broomstick Division frowned when he saw a glittering wave of brown sparks from the ground forces. Those bloody landies could never hold themselves in a fight! He signaled to his left and to his right, and steered his broomstick downwards. He risked a glance behind him and saw two dozen flyers following him in his dive. The wind roared and slashed into the bubblehead charm he was wearing, while the warming charms in his clothes beat away the coldness that assailed him. As he got closer, he suddenly saw a streak of white light burst from one of the towers and rise up towards him.

He gestured fiercely and pulled a sharp left, intent on avoiding the attack, but the streak of light suddenly stopped twenty meters from the diving flyers and rocketed downwards, towards the approaching Aurors and Trolls.

“Merlin!” Warrington breathed as he saw it slam into the ground, tearing past the flimsy shields of the Aurors and vaporise two men in a column of white fire. He signaled desperately to his men and with a complex series of hand movements, they had their orders. He made a sharp turn and as six flyers settled behind him, he rocketed towards the western tower. He shoved his wand in his holster and withdrew a beater's bat from its harness. As he approached the tower, he caught glimpses of small figures on the battlements. He paid them no attention as he zoomed in closer, his bat held firmly in his hands. Behind him, a rider suddenly accelerated past Warrington, a ball the size of a quaffle in his hands. He let it go and pulled away as Warrington approached, swinging the beater's bat with great accuracy. There was a crack as the bat slammed on the ball and Warrington zoomed past the tower with a smug smile on his face as the ball shot towards the tower. The force of the swing had activated the dormant magic inside of it and when it struck the tower, it exploded violently. Fire jutted out and the tower shook slightly as an explosion threatened to tear into it. But an almost transparent shield of magic absorbed the explosion, shimmering and rippling as it bore the brunt of the detonation, fire batted aside with ease. Warrington's smirk fell from his face as he did a lazy loop on his broom, preparing to attack the tower again.

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The tower shuddered under the force of the explosion, but the wards of Azkaban held and Mathew breathed a sigh in relief. He swung his omnioculars after the flyer that had just rocketed past and grimaced as he saw the man loop around. Three flyers fell into formation behind him and together, they zoomed back for the tower.

“Guys, he's coming around again!” He called out urgently. Robin and Richard were busy feeding another volley into the Earth Staff

The two men with the thin blue staffs positioned themselves around the small circular windows in the tower and waited. The staffs they held were thin, medium

sized and light. They each held scatterings of crystals at the end, which glowed in anticipation as the two men fed their magic through the unusual focus.

"Here they come!" Matthew yelled.

The flyers zoomed closer and the two men lifted their staffs. They concentrated and drew their magic through the staff, much like they would do with a wand. The staff accepted the flow of raw and unrefined magic and with the use of powerful enchantments and elaborate runes, transformed and stored the magic into the crystals. The magic quickly built up and the crystals grew brighter and brighter, pale blue light sparkling in the foggy morning.

"On our right!" One of the men shouted and jumped across the room to a different window, his pale-blue staff held out in front of him like a wand.

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Warrington raised his wand, zooming in back towards the tower. Another four bursts of searing white-hot magic erupted from the towers as the Order continued with its bombardment. The searing bolts of heat sprang up towards the sky in a vapor trail of sparkling silver magic. Warrington couldn't help himself and followed the bolts with his eyes as they rocketed upwards, before stopping violently and hanging silently in the air, before lancing downwards at the Auror ground forces. Whatever those weapons were, Warrington had seen nothing like them before.

He turned his eyes back to the tower, his concentration only being diverted for a matter of seconds, but that was all it took for failure. He was closer enough to see the occupants of the tower, two small figures around a large glowing crystal, one figure tracking his progress with a pair of omnioculars and two figures aiming some kind of staff at him....Merlin!

"Bludgers!" Warrington could barely hear himself over the wind as he screamed the codeword for counter-aerial attack. He leveled his wand at the tower and he tugged his broom to the right, flattening himself down. From each of the two staffs came a rapidly-paced barrage of shining golden bursts of energy. Magic flittered through the air, lancing out towards the group of broomstick riders, who scattered and broke off their attack run.

One wizard was struck in the chest three times as he tried to dodge the powerful bolts of magic and screamed as they seared into him. His robes exploded in a shower of flames as the bolts ate away at him, boring holes into his chest. His blood steamed violently and he shuddered madly, his eyes wide with horror and agony, before they went blank and he slumped down on the broomstick. Immediately the broomstick made a steep dive towards the thick walls of the Azkaban Fortress and slammed into them like a comet, the fire catching onto the broomstick as well. The wall shimmered and rippled with an almost-transparent

wave of energy and the broomstick splintered and was crushed under the powerful forces of its own speed and the powerful wards. The wizard was jolted from his seat at the impact and dropped to the ground, his flaming robes burning brightly as they were fed massive amounts of oxygen until he slammed into the sea and disappeared.

Warrington and the rest of his team were much luckier and spiraled away from the fast barrage of searing golden energy. The sky was suddenly consumed with trails of the same energy as staff-wielders from the battlements and towers lashed out at their enemy attackers. Warrington cursed loudly as he pulled up over a burst of seven shining golden streaks of magic, tasting the burnt ozone and intoxicating smell of raw power that surrounded this powerful magic.

The next two minutes became similar to a practice game of Quidditch as Warrington's flyers ducked and weaved, and dodged and dove around and away from the deadly magical bolts. It was almost comical, seeing thirty odd broomstick riders flying in absurd patterns as they strained to flee from death. Several were struck and screamed in agony as they caught fire, their brooms suddenly veering sharply as they slumped to a side. Two of his men simply fell off their brooms as they each zoomed into each other in their evasive maneuvering and fell from a height of seventy meters. Each of them was saved by the ground forces, which were still under powerful bombardment, as safety charms were cast to catch them. Suddenly, after a few minutes, the skies were strangely clear. Warrington steered his broom to the side and stared at the island fortress. The ground bombardment had ceased as well and for a moment Warrington just stared in disbelief, before a clawing sense of relief and triumph came over him. Of course! They couldn't continually power those weapons all day; they had to be extremely draining on a person's magic to cause such devastating effects! That meant that now was the perfect time to strike!

He raised his wand and let loose a shower of red sparks, before flicking them towards Azkaban. The trail of sparks was met with loud roars of anger, defiance and battle-lust as the twenty one surviving flyers grouped together with Warrington in lead, before zooming down towards Azkaban with their bats and wands out.

---

Nolan winced as another streak of white searing flames spiraled down from the sky and struck the ground. The ground rumbled ominously as a column of flames sprouted from where the magical bolt had struck the ground. An Auror screamed as his arm was vaporised underneath the powerful scorching heat and staggered around aimlessly, his arm gone from elbow down. Tears ran down his dirt-streaked face as he sobbed to himself, before the Auror Medic arrived, words of healing already on his lips.



Nolan looked away and glared at the offending battlements of Azkaban with hatred, his lips curling slightly. Damn Lord Voldemort! How was he meant to take this island with a single Auror battalion, when Azkaban had defenses like that? He growled angrily under his breath and stamped the ground, waiting for the next wave of bombardments to slaughter yet more of his Auror's. It never came.

"Sir, they've stopped!" One of the Auror Captains bellowed from across the formations. Dazed Auror's looked up, undeniable smiles of relief and joy on their faces. They believed that it was all over, and for a moment, Nolan pitied them, for he knew that none of them could return without even trying to assault the fortress. No, more people would die today, and most of them would be his.

"Auror's, move in! Keep your heads down; they'll be sending spells from the battlements! Position yourself around the gate...concentrate on the eastern side more than the western side." Nolan barked roughly.

The Auror's obediently began moving forward, their wands up and curses on their lips as they began their siege on Azkaban. Trolls lumbered forward, their shields held high and their clubs dragging on the ground behind them, while Auror's followed behind. Nolan looked up to the sky as he heard a wave of resounding cheers and saw their flyers zooming back towards Azkaban.

Suddenly one of his Auror's pointed to something at the battlements, a panicked look on his face.

"Sir, Phoenix flyers!" He shouted.

Nolan felt his heart wrench and quickly peered where the Auror was pointing to. From beyond the looming walls rose fifteen small specks, and two larger specks, the last two being some kind of beast. He squinted upwards and fumbled for his omnioculars, pressing them to his eyes. The first thing he saw was the beasts, hippogriffs, one mounted by a wizard and one mounted by a witch. The second thing he saw was the leader of the Phoenix flyers, who was dressed in dark robes with a silver trim. Glasses framed his determined glinting green eyes and his face was hard and stony, his wand clasped in his right hand.

"Merlin! It's Potter!"

---

Harry gripped the handle of his trusty old Firebolt tightly as zoomed from the battlements of Azkaban. His wand lay clasped in his right hand, and his eyes were narrowed with anger and determination. The wind swept across him, blocked out by the Bubblehead charm that had been cast around his head to prevent the sun's glare from blinding him.

Behind him rode fifteen of the best fliers in Azkaban, each armed with a specific weapon. Five of them carried wands, much like Harry, while ten others carried beater's bats of different variations; some of them were the plain sturdy bats used to whack Bludgers at other people, while a few of them had a large jagged and barbed metal spike in the end of them.

"Williamson, take the ground forces!" Harry said over the sound of rushing wind, his voice powered by a *sonorous* charm. "I'll take on the Flyers, Greg, take Patecy and Leone, and escort those fliers to the dragon!"

Without waiting to see if his men would obey his orders, for he knew that they would, he flattened himself against his broom and urged its speed up just a fraction. While there were more recent models that outstripped the Firebolt's capabilities, such as the *Starfall*, Harry preferred using his old broom. A small reminiscent smile washed over his face as he recalled the Quidditch games he used to play at Hogwarts. The smile disappeared as he felt the last traces of sadness and self-pity stir into his heart. Focusing, he blanked his mind and emptied it of all emotion, pulling together his powerful mental shields. He suddenly found that he was distanced from his situation, and he was floating amongst the sea of his own calm mind. He was aware of his heart beating, a continual and steady thump, and for a moment he was content. He opened his eyes again and noticed that a group of nine Auror Flyers were approaching him. Next to him, four Flyers flanked him, two with wands and two with bats, while Williamson led his group of seven into a steep dive towards the Trolls and Aurors.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" One of the approaching Auror Flyers cried out loudly, no more than twenty meters away, loud enough for Harry to hear it. A sickening jet of green light streaked from his wand, soaring through the air at tremendous speeds, propelled by the Auror's own momentum. While Harry's companions broke formation and scattered, seeking refuge from the deadly curse, Harry edged his broom slightly, and the streak of glowing green light rushed past him with an accompanying roaring wind. The Auror Flyer gave a start of alarm as he realised that his target was still on course and tried to dive.

"*Spiculum!*" Harry muttered softly, almost to himself, and gracefully pulled away as a shimmering thin silver arc of magic erupted from his wand. It lanced on target and a second later, it struck the Auror in the neck. For a split-second, the Auror didn't move, his broom slowing down as he blinked, trying to comprehend what just happened. Then his eyes bulged and blood dribbled from his mouth as his neck was ripped apart savagely. His head flopped backwards in a rain of dark crimson droplets and his broom veered upwards, until the Auror was flying upside down and lost the strength to cling onto the broom. Both the broom and the Auror dropped to the ground amidst a mist of blood. The Auror was already dead when he struck the ground.



The Auror Flyers responded immediately and zoomed forward, wands and bats up.

*"Ignis!"* One of them cried out, his wand flicking sharply towards one of the Order Flyers, who ducked and rolled as a stream of yellow and red flickering flames roared through the air.

*"Crucio!"* One of the other Auror's cried out, her sharp voice ringing with anger and hatred. The Unforgivable missed her intended target by a hairs length, the red flash sizzling through the air.

*"Expelliarmus!"* One of the Phoenix Flyers snapped, and a scarlet flash of light slammed into a conjured glowing silver dome that surrounded one of the Aurors broomstick. The Auror, however, didn't see the next attack that was aimed at him, and a spiked bat slammed itself past the shield charm and lodged itself in his chest. He gurgled as the force of the blow knocked him off his broom, and a blur of colour raced past the now-empty broomstick.

Together, Auror and Phoenix Flyers battled for supremacy of the sky. Spells erupted from wands with casual ease, most missing their targets as they ducked and dodged the curses. Flyers with bats battled each other, using them like swords as they tried to smash each other out of the sky. A pair of combatants flying at speeds over sixty kilometers per hour struggled over control over a single wooden bat after the other one as knocked out of the Aurors hands. After a few seconds, the Auror managed to give a vicious jab to the Phoenix Flyer's head and grabbed the bat, slamming it down onto the other man's head and crushing his skull. A second later, a cone of tightly suppressed power engulfed the Auror in the stomach, who screamed in absolute agony as his torso was reduced to a mangled heap, killing him instantly.

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On the ground, Nolan desperately laid siege to the walls of Azkaban. From the battlements, the Order defenders rained down curses and spells, brightly coloured rays and beams smashing down on the Auror battalion. Two Trolls were dead, their bodies lying in a heap at the front of the gates and their shields being propped up by Aurors, who ducked under the oppressive hail of spells. Zooming above them was a small contingent of Phoenix Flyers, who were laying waste to the Aurors on the ground. They would dive down, their wands sending waves of sparks as they bombarded them with explosions hexes and large-scale fire spells. Auror's would occasionally send back a curse or two, but for the most part they huddled where they could, usually behind the Trolls or a fellow Aurors corpse, and tried not to get killed.

"Is the siege weapon ready?" He yelled at a subordinated, wincing as a Flyer zoomed over his head in a blur of colour, a stream of fire flowing from his wand as he tried to flush out a group of Auror's hidden behind a troll shield. One of the

surviving Trolls roared with anger as another Flyer swooped down, wand spitting out a shower of glistening silver shards that slashed at the Troll's face. But its helmet protected it from most of the damage and it lifted its club and swung it wildly. The Flyer tried to duck, but the spiked club slammed into her. The broom splintered and snapped under the powerful blow and the Flyer dropped to the ground in several small bloody pieces.

Nolan smiled tightly as he observed the Flyer's death. Bodies were dropping from the sky now, several of them in terrible and bloody condition and most of them Aurors, but there was the occasional Phoenix Flyer who slammed into the ground.

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High above the ground, higher than any of the Flyer battles, the large winged dragon opened its mouth and spat out a large ball of flames. A hippogriff shrieked madly as it beat its wings madly and swooped above the searing ball of yellow flames. Around them, three Phoenix Flyers fought against two Auror Flyers, who were much better at flying than they were. This was apparent when one of the Phoenix Flyers was blasted off his broom by a sleek jet of green light. His lifeless body tumbled towards the ground as his broom slowly began its descent without its rider.

*"Silpormo!"* One of the riders screamed, brandishing a wand fearlessly. A scorching white pillar zapped from his wand and lashed out on the thick hide of the dragon, who roared in agony as it failed to dodge the white beam. Thick black blood oozed from its burn as it swung its spiked tail with deadly accuracy. The Hippogriff screamed in agony as it was sliced into two by the terrible thrust of the blade, while the Dragon lashed out with its teeth at the other one, sinking its fangs into both the Rider and the hippogriff and crushing them.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* One of the Phoenix Riders screamed. As a jet of green light zoomed towards the dragon, the Death Eater riding it waved his wand in a quick and easy movement, and a large chrome disc zoomed off the dragon's back, its harnesses breaking off, and intercepted the curse. It exploded in a shower of molten metal and sickly green flames, but the dragon was safe as it sent a stream of boiling flames the Flyer, who was consumed instantly. The other Flyer broke off and dove down, ducking another stream of flames and zooming back to Azkaban. The dragon roared in triumph and began its descent, its eyes glowing with suppressed rage and heat.

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Suddenly there was a loud roar and Nolan immediately flinched at the very sound of it. High in the sky, the dragon had been fighting two Hippogriff Riders, and now it looked as if it were finished with them. He smiled openly, a dark and terrible smile as the dragon swooped down, ready to assault Azkaban.

“Parks! Re-aim that siege weapon at the eastern tower! Auror’s, concentrate all of your firepower on that tower...I want it to crumble before my very eyes!” He hollered loudly. There were a few surprised blinks at the sudden change of strategy, but most obeyed without hesitation.

Two Trolls pulled away an object and positioned it further back, aiming it towards the eastern tower. The siege weapon was shaped like a catapult of sorts, except that instead of throwing objects, it channeled powerful blasts of magic.

The Trolls grunted in exertion as they stood back and twelve Auror’s stood in a circle around it, their wands all leveled at it. They each muttered a specific charm and stood back as the siege weapon hummed audibly, before a blinding burst of lightning lanced forward from it, striking at the tower violently.

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In the eastern tower, a young woman named Mills brushed her black hair back from her tired face as she swallowed yet another potion. The sour taste made her grimace but she swallowed it quickly and peered out from the small windows. The air battle raged over a hundred meters away, flashes of light flying between small fast-moving figures.

“How long?” She asked hoarsely as she felt her magic stirring within her.

“Give it a couple of minutes, then well start.” A tired young man with blonde hair said, exhaustion clear in his voice. His partner on the Earth Staff moaned tiredly, while her partner on the Air Staff leant on the wall, his eyes half-closed. Nearby, a red-haired woman observed the battle, taking in calculations and positions and sending silvery swirling lights back to the Command Centre.

Suddenly a silver light glided into the room, swirling around the young man and entering his head. He stiffened and jumped to his feet, placing himself around the Earth Staff.

“A dragon’s coming!” He shouted, causing his partner to stir and open his eyes. “Bolshev, get your arse up! A dragon’s coming!”

Mills picked up her Air-Staff and peered from the window, her heart thumping madly. Her eyes were wide with both fear and excitement and she felt her magic grow as the restoration potion began its last phase of treatment.

The red-haired woman peered from her omnioculars, glancing at the skies and at the aerial battle taking place, and frowned in confusion, distress clearly on her face.

“I can’t see it!” She cried out.

"It's above us!" Mills' partner suddenly cried out. Mills jumped back from the window as something leathery flashed past. She gave a startled yelp and staggered back as the dragon roared in fury, flapping its leathery wings as it hovered a few meters from the tower. It opened its mouth and let loose a column of searing flames.

Mills flinched as the flames beat against the powerful wards on Azkaban, barely-transparent magic shimmering and rippling as it absorbed the flames, beating them back madly. The dragon roared again as Mills thrust her staff from the window and channeled her magic. Bursts of shiny golden streaks of magic erupted from the end of the Air-Staff, striking at the dragon. The Dragon roared in pain as it was bombarded with dozens of magical bursts, which exploded in showers of sparks as it struck the almost-impervious dragon hide.

Suddenly the tower rocked as a white flare struck it, and Mills wobbled on her feet, her Air-Staff flying from her fingers as she fell to the ground. At the same time, the dragon opened its mouth again and let loose a stream of fire, which arced towards the tower and struck again at the wards. The wards rippled and flashed madly as they successfully beat back the searing flames, but this time a blur of colour shot forward and raced through the open window. The wards struggled against it for a second, but a purple chaotic light surrounded the figure and it tore open the wards for a brief second, courtesy of the siege weapon, the dragon and the powerful ward-disruptor the Auror carried. He came flying into the tower room, taking them all by surprise.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" The Auror Flyer cried out, skillfully leaping from his broom as he invaded the eastern tower. The blonde man collapsed under an onslaught of green light as Bolshév leveled his Air-Staff. A searing golden bolt of magic slammed into the Auror's chest, killing him instantly. But at the same moment, the dragon and the siege weapon fired again and two more Aurors bearing ward-disruptors flew in, magic cackling from their wands. The red-haired woman gave a shriek of pain, her wand flying from her fingers as she was killed. Mills crawled towards the tower stairs, slamming open the door with her palm, while her partner went down in a spray of blood, taking one of the Aurors with him.

"*Crucio!*" The tired man barked in exhaustion, and the remaining Auror ducked gracefully, rolling to the side and leveling his wand, ignoring the second flash of light that the tired man sent at him, which blasted away the bricks behind him.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" The Auror cried, and the tired man was blasted off his feet by the power of the curse. Mills froze as he turned to stare at her. She was wandless, staffless and in serious trouble. Suddenly there were footsteps pounding up the stairs and a small man rushed into the room, his wand held in shaky hands.

The Auror frowned and regarded the man carefully, before a look of recognition washed over his face.

"You!" He said in surprise, shock clouding his features. "What are...?"

*"Spiculum!"*

The Auror fell to the ground in a shower of blood, his eyes wide with surprise.

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The dragon roared in triumph, a terrible high-pitched shriek that echoed in the grounds as the Air-Staff fire ceased against him. He flapped his wings, opening his mouth to deliver another burst of flames when a streak of colour zoomed in front of him. The dragon cocked its head and swiped with its tail, but the blur of colour easily avoided the spiked appendage and stopped mere meters away from the dragons head, revealing the features of Harry Potter. The dragon roared, spurred on its Death Eater master, and pulled its head back, before releasing a giant wave of searing flames. Harry made a small motion with his wand, just before the flames surrounded and enveloped him.

Harry watched as the flames surrounded him and tried to lick away at his robes and broomstick. The simple third-year Flame Freezing charm worked perfectly and Harry swiped his wand again, dispelling the flames. The dragon in front of him looked confused as Harry smiled coldly and leveled his wand at it.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* He said clearly, and the last thing the dragon ever saw was a blinding flash of green light.

Nolan watched with a heavy heart as the dragon's lifeless corpse tumbled to the ground. It struck the cold dirt of Azkaban and the ground rumbled. He sighed and regarded the eastern tower, remembering how the three Auror's had made it past. Suddenly the western tower glowed, and from it shot a powerful cackling bolt of ashen magic, which spiraled down and enveloped eleven Aurors.

"Not again!" Nolan muttered. He assessed his forces, seeing that at least one hundred of his men were dead, and sighed remorsefully. He needed to regroup and reorganise. Sending up a shower of green sparks, the Auror ground force quickly retreated from the gates of Azkaban, falling back to their boats. Above them, the remaining seven Auror Flyers also zoomed away, while the Phoenix Flyers zoomed back to Azkaban, not giving pursuit.

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Ron watched a swirl of silver strike an analysts head and waited impatiently.

"Well?" He asked with irritation, drumming his fingers impatiently.

“Sir, the Aurors have retreated back to the docks.” The analyst reported quickly.

Another swirl of silver light flooded into the room, striking another analyst.

“All Flyers are down on the ground.”

“Good. Shift us out of here....leave the docks behind.” Ron ordered quickly.

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For Nolan, on the docks, it was not as impressive as it sounded. The island of Azkaban had been there a second ago and suddenly it wasn't. There wasn't a brilliant flash, there wasn't a shimmer, and there wasn't the slightest sound at all. Azkaban was simply gone, leaving behind the remains of the Auror Battalion. The docks he was standing were now alone in the cold large oceans. Above, the seven Flyers zoomed around rapidly, while the injured were loaded into the boats that had been scattered around the island.

“I suppose that means our second wave is cancelled?” An Auror asked Nolan, and sighed with relief when Nolan nodded his head slowly.

“Back to the boats, it's time to go home.” He said gruffly and turned from the docks.

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In a vast ocean, only a few kilometers from the Scotland western coast, Azkaban appeared without a noise. The seagulls cried out mournfully as they circled around the newly appeared island, flying over the dead corpses and past the walls, where the weary defenders began the process of cleaning up. Azkaban was still free.

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## **THE DAILY PROPHET**

### ***The Order of Phoenix Slays Ambassadors!***

#### ***One Hundred Aurors dead!***

*By special correspondent Maria Skeeter*

*Department of Media Affairs*

*Yesterday, the Order of Phoenix agreed to negotiations with the Ministry of Magic, who hoped to find a peaceful solution to the current malicious attacks. The Order of Phoenix invited the ambassadorial party to Azkaban, where they were detained and tortured by Harry Potter.*

*An Auror Battalion was sent out to rescue our courageous ambassadors, but suffered heavy casualties when they engaged in the Order of Phoenix forces on the ground and in the skies over Azkaban. Hundreds of Order members were killed but our elite Auror forces also suffered tremendous casualties. After a furious half-an-hour of fighting, the Order of Phoenix retreated and shifted Azkaban away from the Auror Battalion and left for an unknown location.*

*This marks the largest battle between the Ministry of Magic and the Order of Phoenix in twenty-five years, since the collapse of the former corrupt Ministry of Magic. Families are expected to be notified of any relatives who were murdered during the battle, and the Ministry.*

*This massacre comes no less than a day after Harry Potter broke several dangerous murderers and traitors from the Ministry prison of Morsmordre. There are fears that he is building up an army to invade the Ministry of Magic.*

*"I was in his year at Hogwarts," Tracey Davis, upstanding pureblood witch, says. "He was always up to something...always plotting. He has to be stopped. I think it's time that the Ministry stopped being patient, stopped being merciful, and crushed Harry Potter like the treasonous scum he is!"*

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## **BUNYIP BONANZA**

### ***Civil War in England Escalates!***

### ***Lord Voldemort and Harry Potter fight for control!***

*Yesterday, the Ministry of Magic, headed by the self-proclaimed Dark Lord Voldemort, responded to yesterday's prison-break by storming the island of Azkaban, home of Harry Potter, Commander of the Order of Phoenix. In the resulting battle, over one hundred Aurors and an unknown number of Order members were killed. The rising tensions in the despotic Ministry between Lord Voldemort and Harry Potter have so far, seen over three hundred deaths in the past two months.*

*Lord Voldemort has promised the international community that the threat that terrorises his country will soon be laid to rest. In a speech to the International Confederation of Wizardry, a representative of Lord Voldemort stated. "Harry Potter is a man who does not realise that the past is the past. He is unable to accept that time change."*

*"That makes him a dangerous man. The Ministry will do everything in our power to ensure that Harry Potter does not pose a threat to any other Wizarding nation."*

*But there are some who think that Harry Potter is doing the right thing. For many years, international leaders have been worried in the rapid increase in strength and equipment in England's Auror forces, and have feared an invasion.*

*"As long as Voldemort's tied up with the Order, he won't dare strike out. He's not stupid enough to fight a war on two fronts," said an Australian Ministry Official, who wished to remain anonymous. "The fact is, Voldemort is a dictator of the worst sort. We stood back and let him transform England into his own personal army. Sooner or later, Voldemort will destroy Azkaban and kill Harry Potter, and then he will attack the rest of the world, mark my words!"*



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*Note 1: I will admit that I have never read the HP lexicon, nor glanced at an interview with JK, therefore the population of the Wizarding World and the ratio of Muggleborns to Purebloods is unknown to me. In this story, I've sort of portrayed that the population of the Wizarding World in Britain is around 100k, maybe more.*

*Note 2: You will see throughout the course of the story, the reactions and political positions of the various muggle and magical governments towards Voldemort and Harry throughout the story and you have already seen Australia's reaction in the newspaper article. While there aren't necessary to the plot, they make for an interesting side of the story.*

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A day after the raid, the sun rose from the east, casting a reddish glow over the flickering ocean sea, which glittered madly in the light. As noon broke over Azkaban Island, Harry Potter was walking briskly down one of the damp grey corridors, frowning over the latest casualty reports. Although they had soundly driven back the Ministry forces, there had been eighteen casualties for the Order, with seven in the hospital. While the Ministry had lost at least a hundred Aurors, the Order couldn't even match a fraction of their enemies numbers, and eighteen men and women gone was a great loss in terms of manpower to the small resistance group.

As Harry approached his personal office, he scanned his eyes over the list and let out a small noise of pain as he identified one of the dead members of the DAI as one of his personal favourites. Marks had been a natural flyer, and if it hadn't been that he was born to muggle parents, Harry could have easily seen him playing pro for the English Quidditch team.

"Sir?" A voice broke through his haze and Harry looked up from the parchment, seeing Christina, his secretary of sorts, standing in front of him. She smiled hesitantly, her eyes red and her face blotchy. Marks had also been Christina's boyfriend; in fact, Harry had introduced the two of them to each other.

"Christina," Harry greeted softly, his eyes flickering with sympathy and his usual hardened mask softening.

Christina sniffed softly, wiping a trickling tear away with the back of her hand, before handing Harry a rolled up scroll. Harry glanced down, noting the seal as coming from Azkaban Intelligence, which dealt primarily with Ministry movements and the reports from those sympathetic to their cause.

"It's a message from the Department of Magical Misuse," Christina offered as Harry tucked the parchment of the deceased under his arm and unravelled the scroll, opening it up and peering down at the quickly scrawled message. "I don't

know why they sent it to you personally; usually Ron or Kingsley takes these out.”

“Oh, I know why,” Harry said in a strange voice, split between surprise, amusement and bitterness. He quickly rolled up the scroll, scrunching it up roughly and throwing it over his shoulder. He snapped his fingers and it disappeared in a flash of flickering flames, leaving nothing, not even ashes, while his emerald eyes darkened in thought, his face pensive and calculating.

“Sir?” Christina asked carefully.

Harry looked up and smiled briefly. “Thank you for that message Christina. I assume that this has already passed through to the Raider’s?”

“It seems so sir,” Christina said, flicking her wand and conjuring an extremely thick book, which hovered in front of her. She flicked her wand again, and the pages of the book turned madly in a flutter, until Christina paused on one of the pages. “Ah...yes. Kingsley’s team is leaving in fifteen minutes to retrieve the muggleborn.”

“Tell them not to bother. I’ll take this one personally,” Harry ordered and with one last brief smile, he swirled around, his cloak fluttering madly behind him, leaving behind a befuddled witch.

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In one of London’s outer suburbs, the sun was shining brightly. For English weather, it was a beautiful day, and the children currently returning home from the local primary school dallied, taking their time to scamper around, laughing and giggling with the innocence of youth and ignorance. One such child was a ten, approaching eleven shortly, girl, with blue eyes, with slightly chubby cheeks and long flaxen hair. After an enthralling ten minute conversation of Jamie Sutton’s crush on the new transfer student from Scotland, the girl broke away from her friends and entered the carefully kept green lawn of one of the identical houses on the street, opening the door and stepping inside. As the door shut, she failed to notice the man dressed in casual jeans and a simple dark shirt staring at her with intense green eyes hidden behind a pair of glasses.

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Harry watched the house in front of him for a few minutes, teetering between approaching and staying. It had been a long time since he had made contact with his muggle relatives. After his seventeenth birthday, he had left Privet Drive and never returned, along with some advice for his uncle and aunt to leave at once. They had left for a brief holiday, most likely due to Harry’s threat to turn them into frogs if they didn’t do what he said rather than their common sense, and when they had returned, they found their once-perfect house had been transformed into a smoking heap of rubble. That was the last Harry had ever heard of his muggle relatives, until this morning, when he had received a notice that a

*Blossom Dursley* had been detected using accidental magic. Sighing, he drew himself up and approached the house.

Opening a red-painted gate, Harry took notice of the white-picket fence; the immaculate and well-trimmed garden beds and the 1950's nuclear-family style house and couldn't help but let out a soft snort, shaking his head in a mixture of bemusement and long-lost resignation to Dursley normalcy. He approached the porch and rapped smartly on the doors. A moment later, it was opened as the target of his mission- Blossom, opened the girl with a look of polite curiosity.

"Hey," She greeted politely. "Sorry, I'm really not interested in anything you have to sell."

She made a move to close the door, but Harry quickly wedged his foot between the door and the doorframe, and smiled calmly at her surprised and outraged look.

"Then I suppose it's a good thing that I'm not selling anything," Harry said calmly. "This is the Dursley residence, correct?"

"Yeah," The girl let out a slow drawl and rolled her eyes, making a quirky sarcastic motion with her mouth.

"And you are Blossom Dursley, daughter of Dudley Dursley?"

"Is this about his boxing? If you're some kind of weirdo reporter..." Blossom started.

"Blossom dear, who is it?" A woman called from inside the house. Harry waited as a middle-aged woman with blonde curls and a rather surprising attractive face appeared behind Blossom, scanning Harry's face inquisitively.

"It's some kind reporter mum," Blossom complained. "He jammed his foot in so I couldn't close the door."

"I'm afraid there's been a misunderstanding," Harry interjected quickly. "I'm not a reporter...or a salesman. I'm looking for Dudley Dursley."

"What about?" The mother said a touch suspiciously.

"It's been...a long-time since I've seen him," Harry answered, smiling crookedly. "And I have some urgent news for him. He's definitely not going to like it, but he needs to hear it."

"Well then, could I take a message?" The woman said flatly, clearly not trusting him.

"No, I need to tell him in person." Harry said apologetically. "Look, my names Harry Potter and I don't know if Dudley ever told you about me, but..."

"Harry Potter?" The woman gasped, taking a few steps back and shoving her daughter behind her. "Dudley's cousin? The criminal, the thief?"

"Yes, I'm Dudley cousin...thief? Is that what he told you?" Harry asked in surprise, taking the chance to step inside and close the door behind him. "I assure you, Mrs Dursley that I am not here to harm you or steal from you, or your family. It's quite the opposite actually."

"Dudley said...criminal...Saint something-or-other," The woman mumbled incomprehensively while Blossom was quiet, her cheeks pale.

"I grew up with Dudley's parents, my aunt and uncle, and we had a falling out when I was seventeen," Harry said quickly. "There was an accident at the house, and while nobody was hurt, there was a fire, of sorts, and it burnt down. I know for certainty that I was never forgiven."

The mother and daughter continued to watch him carefully and he sighed noisily, brushing a hand through his hair.

"Look, can I just wait for Dudley? It's very important...and it involves your daughter," Harry said quietly.

"Okay," The woman said at last, after regarding his seemingly open and honest face. "We'll wait in the kitchen. He should be home from the gym shortly, anyway."

Harry nodded his thanks and they tramped into the shiny and spotless kitchen. The woman wordlessly gestured for Harry to take a seat, and he did, shooting a quick smile in her direction, settling into the wooden chair, while Blossom settled into the one on the opposite end of the table, staring at him unblinkingly.

"How do you take your tea?" The woman said, breaking the near-minute silence that had stretched the room.

"I don't drink tea, thanks," Harry answered with a small polite smile.

"Oh," The woman mumbled, and settled into one of the chairs, averting her eyes away from Harry.

"Are you really my uncle?" Blossom finally asked in curiosity.

"Yes, I am," Harry answered.

"Oh." She uttered and fell silent again.

Suddenly the door to the house flew open with a slam, and a multitude of rough teenage voices echoed in the house.

"Alright Big D, we'll see ya around, man,"

"K bro,"

"We need to do this again mate, smash open his face and that,"

"Yeah, what a tool, thinking he could mess with the Big D,"

"Later dude,"

"Right,"

The door slammed again and a tall youth, a teenager boy about eighteen, walked into the room. He wore baggy dark pants, but wore an extremely shiny silver jacket, as was the fashion. His sunglasses were perched on his spiked red-tipped hair, and he wore a look of complete arrogance and self-centeredness.

"Mum, I'm hungry. Get me something to..." The youth trailed off as he entered the kitchen, spotting Harry sitting calmly at the table. "Who's this?" He gestured rudely to Harry.

"This is your uncle, Derek, Harry Potter," His mother said tensely. "Please be more polite."

"My uncle?" Derek claimed incredulously. "The lazy no-good thief? What the hell are you doing here?"

"I've come to speak to your father," Harry said calmly as the boy glared at him haughtily, cracking his neck and knuckles theatrically.

"Well, piss off then," The boy said a touch angrily. "We don't want your kind around here. *We're* not criminals!"

"I can't leave until I've spoken with your father," Harry said, an insincere smile of apology on his lips.

"Leave, or I'll make you leave," The boy hissed, his face rapidly turning purple until he resembled a miniature Vernon Dursley.

"You'll make me leave?" Harry quoted softly, a hard look coming into his eyes. He gazed at Derek stonily, until the teenager shifted on his feet and glanced

away, uncomfortable under the powerful green gaze. "I see that you're just as much as a bully as your father...and your grandfather, I suspect, was at your age."

"How dare you..." Derek hissed, moving quickly forward and raising a fist. "Insult my father!"

Harry jumped to his feet amidst the cries of Blossom and Mrs Dursley, just as the door opened and shut. Derek froze as a loud, booming voice entered the house jovially.

"Amanda, honey, I'm home!"

"Dudley!" Mrs Amanda Dursley, apparently, returned, with a slight quaver in her voice, while Derek lowered his fist and sent Harry a smirk that suggested he was in big trouble now.

Dudley Dursley appeared at the kitchen doorway looking vastly different than Harry remembered him as a youth. While he was still large, the bulky fat that had once made up his body had been replaced with hard muscles. His left piggy-like eye was hidden behind a nasty scar that stretched across his face, and his face seemed more relaxed and peaceful than it ever had. That was, of course, until he spotted Harry standing in the kitchen.

"P-Potter?" He gasped with a fearful expression. "What...how...?"

"Dudley," Harry said, smiling thinly. He gave a quick glance at Derek still standing in front of him, and spoke. "I suggest you restrain your son, before I have to, *my way*."

"Derek," Dudley barked loudly. "Get away from him!"

The fearful tone in his father's voice was enough to spur Derek, and he quickly backed away from Harry as Dudley stepped forward, eyeing Harry carefully.

"What...what are you doing here?" He asked gruffly. "What do you want?"

Harry said nothing, but his eyes flickered in Blossom's direction. Dudley noted this action and purpled angrily, rage flickering in his eyes and his fingers clenching together to make a fist.

"Are you telling me...No!" Dudley spat out furiously.

Harry was undeterred. "Yes," He replied calmly.

"She will not be going to that freak school of yours!" Dudley hissed and moved forward, raising his fists. "I won't let you! That old crack-pot headmaster of yours will just have to accept that!"

"That 'old crack-pot' was murdered over twenty years ago," Harry spoke coldly, his eyes frosting over. He took a step towards Dudley, suddenly radiating a menacing aura. "And never disrespect him again!"

"Murdered?" Dudley stuttered, swallowing heavily

"Yes, murdered." Harry answered flatly. "And there's more to this than you know. The situation has changed in the time we've seen each other."

"Excuse me, but what's going on? What are you talking about?" Amanda interjected angrily.

Dudley and Harry ignored her. "Changed?" Dudley spat. "I don't care! My daughter will not be associated with you freaks!"

"It's already too late Dudley," Harry answered coolly. "They already know what she is, and they're coming for her."

"What do you mean by that?" Dudley whispered softly, half-fearful and half-furious at the seemingly deadly threat.

"When I left, you know that I was involved in a war. I was fighting against somebody," Harry asked him.

"Yeah, that Voribort who killed your parents," Dudley answered angrily. "But what has this..."

"I lost the war, Dudley," Harry answered heavily, and for once Dudley was speechless. "We lost the war. The Ministry fell, the Order of Phoenix was decimated of all but a few supporters. Lord Voldemort has been running my world for the past twenty years. He is in control of the Ministry, he is in control of Hogwarts, and he is in control of all of Britain!"

"Y-You l...lost?" Dudley spluttered.

"I lost," Harry echoed softly. "In a way Dudley, you're right. I am a criminal. There is a bounty on my head so large that you could sculpt a mansion from the gold. The remnants of the Order have only one place that is secure, and no less than two days ago, there was a battle there! Voldemort will not turn his attention to the other communities outside of Britain until he has wiped us out first. The Order of Phoenix is the only thing standing between Voldemort and an all-out world war, where Voldemort will win!"

There was a short silence in the kitchen of the muggle house. Although only two of the occupants knew what was being said, the rest knew that something deep and meaningful was being stated, something horrifying and dangerous was being discussed. The silence didn't last long as Dudley took a deep breath, and an echo of his sneer returned.

"Why do I care?" He snapped angrily. "You'll get no help from me!"

"Because you do not understand Voldemort's nature!" Harry snapped, feeling the ancient feelings of dislike and outright hatred for his muggle family come to bear. "He is a racist! He hates anybody with magical ability that was not born to magical parents! And your daughter, Dudley, falls under that category!"

"Magical?" Blossom said in surprise, interjecting in the furious discussion. "There's no such thing as magic!"

"There is," Harry answered her. "And it's more wonderful and horrifying that you could possibly imagine."

"Dad?" Blossom asked, clearly not believing him, but when her eyes turned to her father, she found that he was pale, and flinched beneath her gaze.

"Dudley, is what he is saying true?" Amanda asked, but Dudley just sat down in one of the chairs and buried his face in his hands.

Harry took the chance to answer her. "In Britain, and most of the world, two societies exist side-by-side. There is a society of technology, your society, of non-magical people. And there is a society of magic, my society. There was a coup over twenty years ago, and our version of a Hitler took control of our government. He despises your society and despise when magical ability emerges in those who do not come from families of magic. Such children are taken away, and exiled or worse."

"That's bullshit!" Derek suddenly sneered. "You're talking shit! Piss off, you crazy freak, and leave us alone!"

Harry shot him a look, but Derek snarled wordlessly and leapt for him, raising his fists.

"Derek, no!" Dudley roared, but Harry moved quicker and with a snap of his fingers, Derek froze, his muscles tensing and his body quivering as he stopped by an overwhelming invisible force. His eyes bulged madly and although he could breathe, he wasn't able to speak or move. Amanda, Dudley and Blossom watched transfixed at Derek's frozen form.



"Sit!" Harry commanded roughly, and Derek felt the force move him along, dragging his feet backwards. His legs suddenly collapsed and he toppled into a chair as the force suddenly left him, landing roughly in the wooden seat and letting out a huge breath of air. He stared wide-eyed at Harry, who ignored him and turned to Blossom.

"Dudley, I need to take her," Harry said, and something like sympathy entered his voice. It was never easy, these missions, but it had to be done. "The Ministry of Magic cannot be allowed to take her away. It will result in her death, or worse."

"What's worse than death?" Amanda asked shakily, moving behind her daughter and pulling her into a hug.

Harry's haunted gaze struck her full-force. "A great many things," He whispered. "Believe me when I say that."

"A-Are you sure?" Dudley finally asked. He looked up, his eyes anxious. "That she's like...you. Are you sure?"

"The Ministry is, and that's all that matters," Harry replied firmly.

"I...I need to talk to my family, to tell them...about you, about what I know," Dudley said in a quavering voice.

"I need to use the bathroom, so I'll give you your privacy," Harry said after a seconds thought. As he turned to leave the room, he swung his head back at Dudley. "But don't try to run, to escape. You can't escape them, not without my help, and I can't protect you if I'm not there."

Dudley gulped, not so much because Harry had known what he was planning, but because of the terrible honesty and truth on his cousins face.

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At the same moment five blue-robed Auror's apparated into the backyard in a series of soft cracks. They appeared in a small circle, their wands held firmly in their dragon-hide covered hands. After a few tense seconds, the tallest and graying Auror gave an audible sigh of relief.

"Maybe the Order doesn't know about this one," He said softly, referring to the frequent battles that occurred between Auror's and Order members of the acquisition of muggleborns. Many of the worst fights with the terrorist group had occurred in the house of a newly-discovered muggleborn that somehow the Order had detected before they had.

"Hopefully sir," A slender middle-aged witch replied just as softly.

"Alright, let's get inside; grab the mudblood, neutralise the family and leave!"

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"You kept this hidden from me for nineteen years! You never told me once about this wizard cousin of yours!" Amanda shrieked.

"What was I suppose to say?" Dudley shouted back. "You don't understand how it was like!"

"I don't understand?" Amanda echoed in anger. "My darling Blossom is apparently in danger because of this...dirty family secret of yours!"

"This has nothing to do with me!" Dudley spluttered, his face purpling madly.

Blossom sat silent at the table, her mind a whirl of what she had been told. She was...magical? Magic existed? And she had a wizard for an uncle? Next to her, Derek sat stonily silent, still shaken up with the incredible ease his apparent uncle had stopped him, shivering every once in a while.

The argument was suddenly interrupted by a loud noise as the backyard door was slammed open. Dudley and Amanda stopped, swinging their heads to the entrance of the doorway as robed figures burst into the room, waving short sticks around menacingly. Blossom shrunk in her seat as she spotted their eyes, which were hard and tinged with disgust at the sight of her.

"Who are you? How dare you..." Amanda started, but the tallest of the strangely dressed man backhanded her viciously to the ground.

"Quiet, muggle filth!" He hissed, wiping his hands on his robes as if he had touched something dirty.

"You bastard!" Derek roared and leapt from his seat, but one of the robed men waved his wand, and Derek felt something blindingly hot strike his face, flinging him to the side. He collapsed to the ground, his eyes flaring up with white-hot pain, while Dudley took a step backwards in fear, grabbing his daughter and holding her trembling body behind him.

"What do you want?" Dudley asked bravely, fear laced throughout his voice and stance.

"Blossom Dursley," One of the Aurors stated roughly. "You are under arrest for the Improper Use of Magic by Lesser Bloods. Resist us, and you will suffer!"

"I won't let you take her!" Dudley yelled, his hand finding a small steak knife in the drawer behind him. He lunged forward, bringing the knife up to bear.

*"Crucio!"* The tall Auror cast, and suddenly Dudley was in agony. It was like a thousand whips were striking at him, all over his body. He fell to the ground, distantly aware that he was screaming incoherently as the pain rushed through him. It was like nothing he had experienced before as a boxer. No punch had ever touched so deep, no jab had ever caused this much agony. As he felt his mind literally giving up against the torrents of pain, it was suddenly gone, and another scream echoed in the kitchen. There were screeches of pain and shouted words. Flashes of light passed through his closed eyelids and the noises of battle drifted through him. Just as quickly as it had started, it was suddenly silent and he forced his head to move and turned it to see Harry in the doorway, his expression furious and grim.

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Harry was in the bathroom, listening with a degree of amusement at the argument Dudley and his wife were having. He chuckled to himself lightly. Who knew that Dudley would take a wife with spirit and nerve? Suddenly the yelling stopped, and Harry stiffened as a group of people pounded through the corridor and into the kitchen. There was a brief silence, until.

*"Who are you? How dare you..."*

*"You bastard!"*

Harry opened the bathroom carefully and quietly peeked down the stairs. He let out a silent breath of air as he saw the customary robes of an Auror guarding the stairwell suspiciously, taking no chances with her group's safety. Suddenly Dudley let out a piercing scream that intertwined with the loud sobs and screams of his daughter. Harry recognized the screams as those that came from one who was under the cruciatus curse, and raised his wand.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* He muttered quietly, pouring in his carefully constructed rage and hatred, and a coil of deathly-green struck the Auror guarding at the bottom of the stairs, blasting her crumpled body backwards. Feeling the adrenaline rush through his veins and his magic burn through him, he practically leapt down the stairs. His eyes took in the scene in front of him in a microsecond. There were four Aurors, one who had seen his comrade fall and was opening his mouth to yell and two watching their leader torture Dudley.

*Sectumsempra!* Harry thought silently, jabbing his wand viciously at the Auror using the *Cruciatus* on Dudley. The Auror never knew what hit him as the concentrated flash of silver burst through the back of his chest, blasting through the protection charms on the robes and killing him instantly. The other Auror yelled in warning, and Harry turned to him, his wand flicking through a series of rapid movements. The small table next to the base of the stairs stretched and dulled into a grayish colour as it was transfigured into stone and flew towards the

Auror, who ducked in alarm as the stone table flew past his head and swung around to strike again.

At the same moment, the two remaining Aurors in the kitchen sent off a barrage of curses, sizzling blasts of scarlet, golden and silver light zooming towards Harry, who twirled his wand and deflected them with ease, batting the sparkling magic into the walls where they impacted, leaving scorch marks and small holes.

*"Accio!"* Harry muttered, directing his mind to the pots and pans behind the Aurors. Thick and heavy copper and steel pans flew from the kitchen bench, striking the Aurors from behind, whacking them across the head and confusing them greatly. As they conjured up silver domes that enveloped their bodies, Harry swished his wand and the flying stone table, which the third Auror had just tried and failed to destroy with a sizzling cackle of maroon magic, rapidly changed course and accelerated towards the kitchen door, striking the two Aurors shields. The shields, designed to stop small physical objects, such as bullets or flying kitchenware, faltered and the stone table slammed into the Aurors, pushing them backwards and pinning them up against a wall to the point where their very bones started cracking. But Harry didn't wait to see this and had immediately turned to a small shelf in the wall, directing his wand over three frames.

The frames wobbled forward and fell off the shelf towards the ground. But they never struck as they were transfigured into large black dogs with gleaming yellow eyes and long white teeth. Each dog landed on its feet just long enough to spring their legs, and jumped forward with a snarl. One of them dove in front of Harry just as a coil of green death burst from the last Aurors wand, sacrificing its 'life' to save its creator, while the other two leapt for the Auror, who managed to quickly blast one back with a powerful banishing charm. The other dog latched onto the Aurors throat and dug in with its powerful jaw, effectively ending the wizard's life.

Harry vanished the dogs with a swipe of his wand and transfigured the two Aurors bodies into small bones, merely for the sake of Blossom rather than himself. He entered the kitchen, noting that Dudley was looking at him from his curled, fetal position on the ground, and that Amanda was hugging her son and daughter close to her as they huddled near the stove, transfixed by the sight of the stone table pinning the two crushed Aurors to the wall.

"Do you believe me now?" Harry asked quietly. "We can get you out of the country, get you somewhere safe. But you must come with me, all of you, now!"

"A-Alright," Dudley croaked as he stumbled up from the ground, shivering uncontrollably. "We'll come with you."

"Dudley," Amanda let out a soft noise of protest, her eyes weepy as she hugged her husband. Harry ignored them and raised his wand, leveling it at the kitchen table. A quick unspoken *Diffindo* severed one of its legs, although the table stayed upright, kept stable by Harry's magic. Harry summoned the long piece of wood to hover in front of him, and frowning in concentration, he tapped it with his wand, picturing exactly where he wanted to go, his eyes fluttering as he ingrained the destination into his magic, his wand moving in a arc.

"*Portus!*" he whispered. The table leg flashed blue and vibrated madly in the air as the magic seeped into it, turning into a one-way portal to a different destination.

"What did you do?" Blossom asked softly, her eyes wide as she stared at the hovering piece of wood.

"I made a Portkey, a device that will take us from this place to another almost instantly," He told her. "Now, everybody hold on."

Dudley, Amanda and Blossom slowly reached out to touch the hovering table leg, while Derek hesitated, then sighed noisily and placed a hand on it as well. Suddenly there was a series of cracks and Harry whirled around to face the kitchen opening, placing a hand on the table leg as he did so. As he activated the Portkey, he jabbed his wand once and let out two spells.

"*Serpensortia! Impendimenta!*"

The group disappeared just as Aurors stormed into the room and a hissing green snake burst from Harry's wand, flying through the air and wrapping itself around a startled Aurors neck, plunging its deadly fangs into the vulnerable flesh underneath the robes. Almost instantaneously, a shimmering *Impendimenta* hex washed over the Aurors, who were alternately tripped, frozen and blasted away. By the time the Aurors had recovered from the effects of the hex, the snake had already killed the unlucky Auror.

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### Later that day

The Prime Minister waited anxiously in his office, watching the fireplace burn and flicker in the darkened room. He nervously tried to avoid staring at the portrait that he knew was watching him. He was always being watched, always, and he hated it. Briefly, he wondered if there was ever a time that the Prime Minister of Britain wasn't under the control of the magical world. He knew that the current Lord had only been in power for twenty years, but to him, that was a lifetime ago.

Suddenly the fireplace flared green and a dark-robed woman with beautiful blue eyes and dark blonde wavy hair emerged. Her face was cold and her eyes

hardened and they regarded the Prime Minister as if he were lower than scum, something that she wouldn't even step on to kill. The Prime Minister swallowed at her gaze and moved to the liqueur cabinet.

"Do you drink?" He asked, his voice only stuttering slightly as he reached for his bottle of scotch.

"Not any filthy muggle drinks," The woman answered with a sneer in her voice.

The Prime Minister violently flinched, the glass shaking in his hand as he poured his own drink, spilling most of it on the cabinet itself. The woman caught this action but her face remained expressionless.

"Why was I called here by the likes of you?" She asked softly, her voice little more than a whisper.

"I-I-I..." The Prime Minister started, before taking a deep breath. "There was a magical battle at a residence in Surrey."

"We know," The Death Eater said, her mouth twisting unpleasantly. "Six Aurors lost their lives to the criminal, Harry Potter."

"I-I see," The Prime Minister said, taking a large gulp of his scotch and welcoming the burning sensation that flooded down his throat and into the pit of his stomach. "Well, I have to m-make a stand on these sorts of things. I don't want..." Here hesitated, taking another gulp of scotch and finishing his glass. "I don't want anymore fighting near the non-magical parts of Britain." He finished with a tone of finality.

The Death Eater paused, seemingly shocked. "You don't want," She echoed slowly, taking a step forward. "You. Don't. Want. You, a filthy muggle, don't want."

The Prime Minister flinched at her words, taking stumbled steps backwards as she approached him.

"Mark my words Muggle, the only reason you still live is because you are of some use to us because in your snivelling pathetic little head, you comprehend the repercussions that would follow if you dared refuse us!" The Death Eater snarled quietly, raising her wand. The tip cackled with dark magic, which itched to strike down the Prime Minister where he stood. All he could do was stare into the beautiful eyes of the woman in front of him, and distantly, in some back part of his brain, he noted that she was extremely beautiful.

"Resistance is useless and ultimately, it would result in your kind's destruction," The woman continued, still staring at him intently.

The Prime Minister silently disagreed with that statement, knowing that at the very least, the non-magical world could fight back. Images flickered through his mind, of SAS troopers firing upon wizards, of sleek fighter jets sending their explosive missiles from over a kilometre away, of heavy battleships bombarding Wizarding locations, and the woman twitched.

“So, you believe that you’re technology could defeat us,” She mused softly, and the Prime Minister gave her a startled and fearful glance. She smiled in amusement, shaking her head as if she found something extremely funny.

“We could,” He said strongly.

“No, you couldn’t,” The Death Eater said, still smiling and backing away. “Tell me Prime Minister, how would your bombs find targets they couldn’t see? How would your bullets penetrate our most basic physical shielding charms? How can your battleships attack us if a single witch or wizard apparated on board and struck down everybody in their sleep? How could your soldiers shoot at enemies that are invisible, enemies that can yank their weapons from their hands, blast them apart with a mere flick of a wand, incinerate your tanks and mechanised infantry? How could your helicopters attack us when dragons spat fire at them and tore them apart with their teeth?”

The Prime Minister was shaking with fear, still staring into the eyes of the witch in front of him, the images flashing through his mind as she maliciously tore down his hopes. It wasn’t until she broke her gaze that he realised what had happened.

“You looked into my mind,” He said, swallowing heavily as he eyed the witch with a new dose of fear.

The witch smiled thinly. “I am proficient in what my kind calls Occlumency and Legillimency. There are none in Britain who are better, not even my Lord or the traitor, Potter. Listen to me Muggle, and listen closely. I, unlike most of my kind, have studied your culture, your technology, your *science*.” She spat the last word out as if it disgusted her. “I know what you are capable of and I know what we are capable of. For the sake of your life, and the life of your pathetic and inept world, I suggest that you place thoughts of rebellion and war into a small box in a dark corner of your mind, and never open it again!”

The Prime Minister nodded hastily and the witch sneered at him, before another voice intruded on their conversation.

“Avery, we require your presence,” The portrait on the wall seemed to say, before falling still.

The witch, Avery, moved towards the fireplace and threw in a fistful of powder. The flames flickered green and she stepped in, taking once last look at the Prime Minister. "Remember what I said!" She said coldly, and then she was gone.

The Prime Minister sat in silence for a minute, before he sighed in weariness and resignation. As he stood up to get himself another much-needed drink, he wondered briefly why he, the leader of one of the most powerful nations in the world, suddenly felt like crying.



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Later that night, Harry sat in his private study, seated in one of his extremely comfortable armchairs in front of the fireplace that burned with an everlasting green blaze. In front of him was a table where a jumble of scrolls from the various departments in Azkaban lay waiting to be read, and in some cases, signed and approved. What really caught his gaze was the single scroll bound together with silky black string. The string, a creation of Harry's, was heavily enchanted and had been given to his most trusted and valuable spy within the Ministry, a spy with powerful connections and a considerable amount of influence. Only Harry could open it safely, indeed, only Harry knew the spy, and although the enchantments could be broken, it was written in a specially devised and unique code, only known to Harry and the spy in question. With quick silent *Accio*, the scroll zoomed into his waiting hand. Harry carefully tapped the string with his wand, muttering a guttural phrase in Trollish of all languages, and the string unbound itself and slithered away. He opened the scroll, taking his time to translate the message from the code he had devised, and felt his heart quicken at the first part of the message.

*One of the items you seek is, at the present moment, located in the Headmasters Office at Hogwarts. The Headmaster seems unaware of its true value, but the Dark Lord is most certainly not. I have personally arranged that the wards will be accessible for a single minute at the edge of the great lake, tomorrow night at nine. Escaping Hogwarts should not be a problem, especially with your reputation.*

Harry's lips curled up and for a moment, he looked happier than he had been in decades. Finally, another Horcrux had been revealed! Before the Fall of the Ministry and his time as an Auror, just after Dumbledore had died, he had gone searching with Ron and Hermione for Voldemort's horcruxes, and had managed to only find and destroy one, Hufflepuff's Cup. Since then, the quest had withered away and although Harry had identified the last of the items, finding them had been an impossible task. As his mind sped into action, he glanced down at the scroll to read the rest of the message, which was a hastily scrawled afterthought.

*There are rumours of a large operation being planned. Intercepted conversation between Lestrage and top-level Death Eater identified the operation named as "Evanesco"*

*Unsure to purpose as of yet, will strive to discover.*

*Yours loyally*

Harry's face creased as he frowned in thought. An operation named after the Vanishing Charm? What was Voldemort up to now? He sighed softly to himself, tapping his wand idly on the side of the armchair and watching small golden sparks zap from the tip, deep in thought. Was Voldemort preparing to start his

inevitable attack on other Wizarding nations, who, Harry knew with cold certainty, couldn't match the Dark Lords power. After Voldemort took over Britain, it had taken him years to consolidate his power, during the time where Harry made his greatest attacks and victories, almost destroying the new regime entirely. Many people had died on both sides and it was only afterwards that he realised that that had been a mistake, that he by attacking as he had, he had portrayed himself to various Wizarding nations, who only knew his name as a magical anomaly, a baby who had survived, as a powerful rogue wizard. Whatever support he might have hoped to garner was lost and at the time the other nation seemed content to let Britains little civil war drag on, as long as they weren't bothered, not recognising Voldemort's true power and intentions. Harry shook his head, dragging his head out of his memories and gave a small bark-like chuckle to himself.

"They're regretting that now," He murmured to himself.

"Who is regretting what?" Another voice broke into his thoughts.

Harry started, his magic flaring up in an instant, ready to wandlessly and wordlessly strike at someone as he swivelled his head, his green eyes narrowing dangerously, before his brain caught up to his instincts and he recognised the voice and face as Christina's, who seemed amused by the reaction she had received.

"Just old thoughts," He admitted with a small smile, standing up and stretching his tired muscles.

Christina nodded, aware of her boss' peculiarities, and handed him a small cup of firewhiskey. Harry accepted the cup and gulped it down, enjoying the heated sensation that burned his throat and stomach while suppressing the magical reactions that caused the expulsion of flames from his mouth.

"Christina, if I say *"Evanesco"*, what do you think of?" Harry asked curiously.

The pretty witch frowned. "The vanishing charm?" She responded, half-answering, half questioning.

"Hmm," Harry murmured with a frown. "I wonder what he's up to now."

Christina didn't respond to the musing question, and was well aware of who 'he' was. But, if anybody could stop Voldemort, it would be her boss. For a moment, Christina felt nothing but affection for the man in front of her, one of the most powerful wizards in the world who had taken it onto himself to destroy evil, who had forced himself to become more powerful, more intelligent, more cunning and more cold and calculating in order to protect those under his command. If though he was bound under prophecy, which was public knowledge although the exact

contents were unknown, Christina privately thought that like the rest of the Order, he would have fought anyway, whether it was for revenge or for a better future. Either way, he would have fought.

"Why don't you get some rest, sir?" She suggested warmly. "I'll neaten up this place and sort through the non-classified scrolls for you."

"That...would be good," Harry murmured as he stood, clutching the spy report in his hand.

Christina watched him enter one of the doors in the large study, and as she moved to work on the scrolls, he ducked his head back into the room, an almost mischievous look on his face.

"Oh, and Christina? Inform the Department of Military Affairs that I'm infiltrating Hogwarts tomorrow."

Christina stared, almost dumbstruck, as he disappeared back into his room, before a sly grin came over her face. She loved being the bearer of shocking news. Absently humming to herself, she waved her wand, stacking the scrolls neatly in a pile, before going off to deliver the news, eager to see the look on Ron's face.

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"So, what mission is so important that we need to invade Hogwarts?" Ron asked the next morning, scepticism clearly drawn on his scarred face. Both wizards stood in the analysis room, which was the hub for all internal and external reports, as well as the centre of all intelligence-related activities. Around them, wizards bustled back and forth in their grey robes, pouring over scrolls and pensieve memories, several of them occasionally glancing at two most-famous Order members idly chatting

Harry's eyes flickered around the large room, noting that several wizards and witches were subtly peeking through the corner of their eyes, straining their ears to overhear the conversation. Ron noticed the move and sighed, giving a wry smile.

"I'm not going to like this, am I?" He asked, half-amused, half-weary.

"You're not going to know," Harry said firmly. "Because I'm doing this mission alone."

"Alone?" Ron asked, almost spluttering in surprise, his eyes widening a fraction as he stared at his oldest friend. "Are you mad? Harry, you're good, but you're not that good. We've just learned that there's two dozen Death Eater's stationed

at Hogwarts, for some stupid commutation about Voldemort's takeover. Even if you got past the wards, you can't take them all out."

Harry raised his hand and Ron fell silent at once. "I said "I" was doing "this" mission," he said, a touch firmly.

Ron looked slightly abashed, but still defiant, until Harry continued. "But, "you" will be coming with me with different orders."

Ron frowned, his scarred face twisting into something quite unsightly. "There are two different missions at Hogwarts?" He murmured.

"Without my mission, I wouldn't authorise yours," Harry said. "But, since we'll be there anyway, this can give me a chance to initiate something I've wanted to do for a while."

"What is it?" Ron asked, before glancing around at the public setting. "Maybe we should..."

He was interrupted as one of the working wizards wordlessly handed Harry a red-stringed scroll, before going back to work without another thought, knowing well enough to keep what he had gathered secret. Harry unravelled the scroll and briefly glanced down at it before silently handing it to Ron, who took one look at it and closed his eyes wearily. When he opened them, they were determined and stubborn.

"We need to talk," Ron said quietly. "Privately."

Five minutes later, and after several precautionary powerful privacy, silencing and concealment charms and wards had been cast around in Harry's study, Ron rounded on Harry with a grim expression on his face, his eyes flashing with anger as he clutched the scroll in his hand.

"This?" He asked incredulously. "This is the mission?"

"We're both going to Hogwarts to, ah, *acquire*, something," Harry said, a touch delicately. "For me, it will be a Horcrux."

"You mean you've found another?" Ron asked, the matter temporarily dropped as his excitement flared.

"So my spy tells me," Harry remarked quietly.

Ron made a small face. "You must trust them an awful lot to tell them about the horcruxes."

Harry's lips curled into a mysterious smile. "I do," he said quietly. "I trust the spy enough to know that they would never betray me."

Ron stared at Harry for a few seconds, a troubled expression settling on his face. "That's what Dumbledore thought about Snape," he said quietly. "If a spy will turn once, he might turn again."

"I'll keep that in mind," Harry said. "But every single meaningful victory we've had over the past four years, and many minor victories before that, can be attributed to my spy."

Ron nodded, clearly not wanting to drop the matter, but a single glance at the scroll in his hand was enough to change the subject.

"Harry," he began, his face troubled. "We've done a lot of things that I am not particular proud of, but this..."

"We're not killing anybody Ron," Harry interrupted, a touch coldly. "I'm acquiring a Horcrux, you're acquiring a student. Both are extremely valuable, in two different ways."

"She's a Second Year!" Ron burst out angrily, throwing the scroll down onto Harry's desk, on which there was a photo of a cheerful-looking young girl with cropped black hair and light blue eyes waved enthusiastically, occasionally turning to her left to laugh at something somebody else outside the photo had said. Below the photo, in a spindly narrow scrawl, was all currently known information about the girl, name *Daphne Annabel Pucey*.

"And she is the daughter of the Head of Magical Economics," retorted Harry, glancing down at the photo of the girl. "With careful planning, we can replenish out dwindling finances with some much needed gold."

"Kidnapping children for money," Ron muttered darkly, his face clearly showing his displeasure and disapproval at the idea. "Is that what we've become? Common thieves and kidnappers?"

"We're broke Ron," Harry said flatly. "We need the money. Despite what the outside world thinks, we have to pay for a lot that happens here. Neville needs money to pay for the greenhouses and the farmers, who won't work without some compensation, Hermione needs money to import textbooks and updated spell books, Ginny needs money for the ingredients we can't steal for her potion, Luna needs money for her hospital and the potions Ginny can't make, you need money for your men and women, for the dragonhide vests and armour, for the Enchanters who make our weapons, and I need the money to persuade our spies and everyday criminals to tell us something useful."

"She's still a child," Ron replied softly. "We've never gone to these sorts of tactics before. I don't see what's changed now."

"We're losing this war," Harry said, his anger simmering below the surface of his emotionless and hard exterior.

Ron flinched. "Azkaban is still safe." He pointed out. "We're not completely lost yet."

"Our numbers are at an all-time low, Ron," Harry pointed out. "Our attacks today are nothing compared to ten years ago, and more and more people leave Azkaban for the relative safety of other countries each year. If we don't end this soon then I think it's only a matter of time; months, maybe a year or two if we're lucky, before we're overrun and destroyed."

Ron flinched as the cold, bare facts were laid out in front of him. He knew this, of course, but to hear it spoken by the strongest, magically and emotionally, person he knew was quite foreboding.

"If this truly is a Horcrux, and we can obtain it, then we only have two more Horcruxes left before Voldemort is mortal- two, including his original soul." Harry finished.

"You still don't think that he would have created anymore Horcruxes?" Ron questioned.

Harry shook his head, looking certain. "He was pushing it at two, let alone seven. It was only through powerful modified rituals especially based on the magical potential of "seven" that had managed to go as far as he did. If he tried to make a new one, he would split and destroy the protections binding the last remaining fragment of his soul to his body."

"That would be bad, then?" Ron asked.

"It would be the same as kissing a dementor, and Voldemort wouldn't risk that," Harry said firmly. "Not after he's achieved what he's always wanted."

There was a minute of silence as both wizards emerged themselves in their thoughts, before Harry spoke up again.

"So, you will do this mission for me," He asked again carefully.

Ron gave a rueful laugh. "When have I ever refused a mission from you?" He snorted quite bitterly. "I suppose you have a way in."

"Yes, but I don't have a secure way out," Harry told him. "I'll think of one though, you go get your team ready."

Ron nodded, some sourness still on his face, and left, leaving Harry alone in his study.

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Deep within an unplottable location in Scotland, a tall and magnificent castle stood, thousands of tiny lights twinkling in the fresh air. For over one thousand years, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry had been a pinnacle of magical education, where eager young wizards and witches went to learn the secrets of magic. After Lord Voldemort had taken over the Ministry, all Muggleborns were expelled as Severus Snape went back to as Headmaster, a prestigious position that he enjoyed once he realised he did not have to teach. These days, Hogwarts was a heavily warded Dark Arts school devoted to the beliefs of Voldemort. A noticeable aura of darkness enveloped the once beautiful castle as generations of young magic-users were taught to focus their hate and rage into tools of violence and torture.

While Hogwarts was still standing, the ancient wards that had once guarded the school had almost vanished, as if they could sense the evil and darkness of their present owners. Although other wards had been cast, powerful in their own right, they were not up to the standards of the previous wards, which allowed Harry's spy the opportunity to briefly allow access to two intruders. Around Hogwarts, the dark lake shimmered brightly in the pale moonlight as at the edge of this lake, not too far from the school; two dark figures emerged from the lake, barely noticeable as they slipped into the shadows surrounding the school.

Harry quickly dove into the shadows and away from the wards that surrounded the lake, waiting tensely as Ron followed him. A moment later, Harry sensed an oily presence slide over the shoreline as the dark wards re-activated. Flicking his wand, he dispelled both the bubblehead charm surrounding his head and the impervious charm surrounding his body. Next to him, Ron did the same in two wand movements, glancing up at Hogwarts and shuddering.

"This is what Hogwarts has become?" He whispered to himself.

Harry said nothing, but could feel his own disgust and revulsion mixing in with Ron's. As he stared at his former home, brief flashes of memory flew through his head- The Philosophers stone, the Chamber of Secrets, Sirius and the Dementors, the Tri-wizard Tournament, Umbridge, and lastly, Dumbledore and his death at the hands of Snape. His eyes glinted coldly and his lip pulled back into an animalistic snarl at the thought of the traitorous filth lauding it up in Dumbledore's rightful office.

"You know your mission, right?" He asked Ron.

"Yeah," Ron answered, his voice tight with strain as he stared at Hogwarts and the dark magic that simply radiated off it. "I'll get to it then and send the signal when I'm done."

"Go," Harry said, and Ron obeyed, slinking off into the night under a powerful invisibility spell.

Harry remained where he was, his face thoughtful as he pondered his upcoming mission, before he heard an extremely soft rustling movement. He spun around silently, drawing himself deeper into the foliage and raising his wand as a figure walked approached the line of trees and bushes he had hidden himself in. As they got closer, Harry narrowed his eyes and stepped forward, revealing himself. The figure stopped as they saw Harry standing in front of them with his wand raised.

"Do you not recognise me?" They asked softly, taking a step forward.

"I do," Harry responded quietly, his green eyes intense.

"I am," the figure started, and moved forward until they were totally revealed while watching as Harry's hardened emerald eyes lightened and his face softened with fondness. "*Your most loyal.*"

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Ron crept along the dimly lit passages, his mind drifting back to better days when he was a student, creeping out after hours and doing his best to avoid Filch. He mentally snorted to himself, remembering how he had sometimes had been so scared that Filch would find him. Thirty years later, and he was doing the same thing, except getting caught this time will actually mean torture, rather than Filch's half-hearted grumbling.

He approached the Head of Ravenclaw's office, darting his head back and forth to see if there was anybody around, before slipping his hand into his robes and pulling out an ornately carved golden eye-piece. He placed it on his left eye and squinted past the thick and sturdy wooden door, the eyepiece flicking his vision to that similar to a muggle x-ray, allowing him to see the skeletal form of the Professor sitting down with his feet up, a square book in his hand. There seemed to be no other people in the room, so he took a deep breath and knocked softly, trying to echo the knock of a scared first year.

Using the eye-piece, he could see the tall man- it was definitely a man, Ron could tell, stand up and head for the door, grabbing a thin object from the table on the way.



The doorknob turned and the door slammed open, revealing a tall lanky man with cold blue eyes and sharp features permanently twisted up into a look of revulsion and arrogance.

"You little brats better have a good reason for being up so late, I'm already going to give you ten lashes..." The man started with an angry hiss, before he sighted Ron standing there with his wand levelled directly at his head.

"*Stupefy!*" Ron hissed, and a red flash of light slammed directly into the man's eyes, blasting him backwards and sending him to the ground, his body awkwardly sprawling out on the floor. "*Petrificus Totalus!*"

The man stiffened in unconsciousness, and Ron took the time to bind and silence the man, eyeing the narrow switch the professor had been holding with angry eyes. He plucked a hair from the man's head and disillusioned the body, before levitating it and placing behind a large couch. He only hoped that nobody came looking for the Professor in the next five or so minutes, or there would be trouble. Placing the hair into a small vial of a thick brownish paste, he looked faintly disgusted as the Polyjuice turned into a sickly purple, then gulped it down. He felt the transformations take place, and after conjuring a mirror to be certain, left the room for the Ravenclaw Common Room.

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Daphne Annabel Pucey gave a quiet sigh in frustration as she bent her head over her History of Magic homework in the Ravenclaw Common Room, absently chewing on the end of her quill as she wracked her brains over her current assignment, famous war heroes who perished in the last war. She had chosen Daphne Greengrass, the powerful witch who had fallen to the wand of Harry Potter, and her namesake.

"What's wrong?" Her friend, a shy-looking brunette Second Year asked softly. All around them, students studied studiously and almost silently, speaking only in soft whispers as they poured over homework and dark magic books, trying to get it all in their heads before the next class and avoid a lashing or switching.

"I can't remember the Order members Greengrass defeated before Potter murdered her," Daphne said, sighing again with frustration.

"It was that Old Ministry Auror, the crazy-one with one-eye," Her friend said, frowning in deep thought. "And the other one, the metamorphmagus, with the funny name."

"Alastor Moody!" Daphne said with sudden remembrance and scribbled down the name. "And Nymphadora Tonks. Thanks, I really couldn't remember those names."

"No problem," the other girl said quietly, scribbling something over her own piece of parchment. "I'm doing the Werewolf Exterminations, just after the Fall of the Ministry. Fenrir Greyback sounds so evil, I'm just glad that the Dark Lord wiped out their kind when their usefulness was over."

Suddenly the Common Room portrait door opened. The Common Room fell silent as Professor Blackthorn entered, his cool eyes sweeping the room with a strange look, settling on Daphne. A look of triumph flashed through their Head of House eyes, although no student saw it as they bent down in their work, completely silent as they waited for their Professor to dish out an unexpected punishment.

"Pucey!" Professor Blackthorn said softly. "Come with me. Your parents have requested your presence."

Daphne exchanged a startled look with her friend and stood up. As she moved to put her books away, Blackthorn scowled.

"Now!" He insisted. "I'm sure one of your friends can do that for you."

Daphne nodded slowly and with one last bewildered look to her friend, left the room with her Head of House by her side.

Together, Professor and student travelled through the darkened hallways without a single word being spoken between them. While Daphne looked calm and collected, her mind was racing. What could her parents want now? Oh Merlin, please do not let it be about a marriage contract. She tried to edge a look sideways at her professor, but his face gave away nothing. Finally, the two reached Professor Blackthorn's office, and he wordlessly opened it and beckoned Daphne to enter. Daphne swallowed and tried to calm her racing mind as she entered, fully expecting to see her mother's stern but loving face and her father's infectious smile. But the office was empty. Dimly, Daphne heard the door close behind her.

"Professor, there's nobody..." She started, turning around, only to see the Professor's oddly regretful face as he raised his wand. A blinding flash of red registered in Daphne's brain before all went dark.

Ron stared at the stunned body of the young girl in front of him with something akin to self-disgust and pity. He raised his wand, and clearing his mind of all external distractions, made several sharp loops, followed by a series of soft flick, as he carefully transfigured the girl into a small turtle, being extra-careful to make sure that he didn't accidentally harm her. A throbbing blue flash emerged from his wand, enveloping the stunned student. After the transfiguration was done, Ron conjured a small but sturdy metal cage and placed the turtle inside.

"*Enervate!*" He muttered, waving his wand over the disillusioned Professor lying on the couch. "*Finite Incanterum!*"

The real Blackthorns eyes opened, dazed and confused, and stared upwards. Surprise and shock flooded through them as he saw himself standing above him.

"What..." He began, only as his double waved his wand, flicking it sharply towards him.

Suddenly he felt something slide into his mind, ripping apart his natural mental defences with ease. He groaned, before going silent as his memory of the past thirty minutes or so disappeared and new ones emerged...*sitting back, reading his book...a floo call from Adrian Pucey...urgently needed so see his daughter...going to the Ravenclaw tower, gathering the brat...the girl disappearing in the Floo...going back to his book...completely natural....nothing odd....small degree of irritability at being bothered...tiredness...falling asleep on the couch, book propped on his stomach....*

Ron lowered his wand as he cast the sleeping charm and the eyes of the professor tiredly closed as he began sleeping. He carefully placed the book the professor had been reading before, *Dark Arts of the Wild African Plains*, onto his stomach and, summoning the small cage he had conjured, pulled out a small clear crystal and muttered a wandless incantation. The crystal pulsed in a sparkling soft white glow as Ron placed it back in his robes, before exiting the office quietly, his mission complete.

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Harry approached the Headmaster's office carefully, hidden beneath a powerful invisibility charm. Portraits stared at the corridors with blank eyes, their personalities corrupted by the dark magic around the school. Occasionally a ghost would fly hurriedly by, their dead eyes sweeping the corridors for intruders. Powerful dark magic and enchantments had been placed on the ghosts, twisting them into mere wisps who served the Headmaster, and by default Voldemort, without question. Finally, after a gruelling two minutes where a tall bloodied ghost with no eyes had almost pierced the invisibility, silencing and notice-me-not charms around Harry's person, Harry arrived at the large gargoyles which hid the Headmaster's office. There didn't seem to be any portraits or ghosts nearby, so Harry prepared to blast his way into the office, grab the Horcrux, and leave before anybody knew what was happening. It had been ten minutes since he had departed from his conversation with his faithful spy after receiving Ron's message that his mission was complete, so Harry hoped that Ron was near the edge of the Forbidden Forest by now, where Harry's spy had hidden two brooms.

Harry gathered his magic, funnelling it into the slim piece of holly he held in his hands. His wand started vibrating madly, heating up in his hands, and the tip cackled with suppressed magic, just straining to erupt. Just as Harry was about

to launch an extremely powerful Obliteration Curse at the entrance, the Gargoyle suddenly looked up, winked, and opened up!

Harry simply stared in amazement, a look of confusion and surprise appearing on the normally emotionless face. He let his magic die down, feeling it return into his body and flow through his veins, and his wand stopped vibrating, the heat fading away. He quickly checked to see if somebody was coming down, pressing himself up against one of the walls, his stealth charms still active. But nobody came down the stairway and nor was there anybody approaching. After a few minutes, Harry frowned, regarding the open stairway with suspicion. He flicked his wand, letting loose only the tiniest of magic as he cast a weak but effective ward-detection spell. There were none active, it was as if they had been shut off or diverted. Finally, after a few more minutes of silence and quick thinking, Harry took a deep breath and risked putting his foot on the first step. Nothing happened, so he continued, walking up the stairways slowly as if he were expecting a trap. For any other item other than a Horcrux, Harry would have aborted the mission, but this was a one-time deal and essential to Voldemort's defeat, so he risked the chance that he may be walking into an ambush. At the top of the stairs, the door opened silently, much like the gargoyle, and Harry stepped inside Snape's office, almost wanting Snape to be there so that Harry could finally have his revenge.

But the office was empty and it had been transformed greatly from Dumbledore's time. The shelves had been cleared off the little knick-knacks and peculiar magical items that to this day, Harry still became confused over their identity and purpose. They had been replaced with a mixture of dark magical items, including a withered Hand of Glory, a shiny silver hangman's noose, an amulet shaped into a Celtic cross that radiated dark magic and so on. The bookshelves were packed to the brim with advanced Dark Arts and Potion tomes, all which looked to be getting quite dusty. The phoenix perch was gone and the portraits on the walls were empty, the former Headmaster's and Headmistresses not present in the frames. The item that drew his attention was a tiny pocket sneakoscope, ancient in looks and application. It looked as if it had existed a thousand years and would fall apart at any time, but Harry could sense huge waves of malice and evil rolling off the derelict magical device and hitched a breath. That was it. That was the Horcrux, carefully placed inside Godric Gryffindor's personal sneakoscope.

Suddenly a voice drew him out of his thoughts.

"Hello Harry, my dear boy, it has been quite some time."

Harry whirled around to the portraits, and there, sitting in a frame titled *Mercuria Dodge* was Albus Dumbledore, his eyes twinkling merrily. He lowered his wand in stunned disbelief, his mind whirling.

"Dumbledore!" he breathed.

"Alas, it is I." Dumbledore said happily, eyeing Harry fondly. "You may drop the charms that you have littered on your person, even as a portrait I can see past them."

Harry did as he was told, staring at Dumbledore's portrait figure in complete bemusement. "I won't believe that they made a portrait of you," he said bluntly.

Dumbledore chuckled. "My goodness, no," He exclaimed. "My brother had one commissioned after my death and it was placed in a remote cottage, which had once belonged to me, after the Fall of the Ministry."

"Then how did you get here?" Harry asked.

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled, his beard twitching as he ran a gnarled hand through it. "My connection to Hogwarts, as a previous Headmaster, allowed it." His eyes dimmed, showing an incredible sadness. "Hogwarts, beautiful Hogwarts has been suppressed by dark enhancements and wards, constrained and bound. She can only wield a tiny amount of power at a time. When you approached this office, Hogwarts, bound as she is, recognised you and granted you access while summoning me to these frames, whose occupants are suppressed much like Hogwarts."

"She?" Harry echoed.

"Hogwarts could be a she or a he," Dumbledore explained. "Hogwarts is a powerful magical object and while possessing no conscious mind, she retains a certain sentience. I refer to Hogwarts as a "she" merely because it seems appropriate."

"She recognised me?" Harry asked.

"Your magical signature, you essence, your life-force," Dumbledore answered quietly. "She associates you with me, largely due to the close bond we once shared. She knows that you never meant her harm and you would not have bound her and hurt her as the current Headmaster has. Therefore, she temporarily disabled the wards on this office and sent for me, enabling us to meet once again without alerting the Headmaster."

"Snape," Harry muttered.

"Yes, Severus," Dumbledore said with a tired sigh.

Harry had so many things to say, so many questions that he needed answering and a large urge to say "I told you so!" but he restrained them all and pointed at the sneakoscope. "That's a Horcrux." He said bluntly.

Dumbledore peered from his portrait over his half-moon glasses. "Ah," he muttered. "Interesting."

"After this, there's only two more, three including Voldemort himself," Harry said.

"That is good, that is good," Dumbledore said softly. He stared at Harry, running his eyes over his appearance, and his eyes seemed to glisten. "Harry my boy, you do not look well."

Harry looked over himself. "I'm as well as I have been for the past twenty years." He said.

"Your hair is greying," Dumbledore replied. "In a wizard as young as you, that is a sign of an extreme amount of stress and hardship."

"That's no surprise there," Harry said, snorting slightly. "It's been a long time since I wasn't stressed."

Dumbledore nodded sagely. "I do remember hearing that you are running the Order of Phoenix out of Azkaban."

"Not to much success recently," Harry admitted. "We're weaker than we ever have been before."

"I gather that is what has provoked you to take this dangerous mission?" Dumbledore asked.

"If we kill Voldemort, it will all fall apart," Harry said grimly. "The masses tolerate him because they fear his power. If he is dead, then they won't let the Death Eater's continue their reign of power."

Dumbledore nodded, before his eyes unfocussed and glazed over as if he were sensing something that Harry couldn't. Harry watched carefully as Dumbledore shook himself out of his stupor and turned back to Harry, his face grave. "Hogwarts cannot delay the wards on this room for much longer. It is draining her at a faster rate than she anticipated! Take the Horcrux and go! She has disabled the wards on it! You must go!"

Harry flicked his wand sharply and the ancient sneakoscope zoomed from its place on the shelf towards him. He quickly stuffed it into a secure anti-theft pocket in the inside of his robes and turned to leave.

"I'll see you again, Dumbledore," Harry vowed quietly to the portrait.

Dumbledore smiled sadly, before his face twisted up in confusion and abruptly he was gone. Suddenly Harry felt the presence of dark wards reactivating

themselves and with muttered curse, Harry raced out of the office, jumping down the stairs in a rush to get out of the office. It was only as he neared the bottom and breakneck speed when he sensed a secret and hidden ward activating around him as it sensed his unwelcome presence. Just as Harry was almost out of the stairwell, a cascade of pulsing dark magic erupted from the walls in a large continuous burst that resembled muggle electricity. Harry tried to raise a shield, but he was too slow, and the ward swept over him. Cackling dark magic consumed his body, catching him and binding him to the floor. Harry screamed in agony as a pain reminiscent of the Cruciatus Curse swept over him as bright blue and purple electricity-like magic zapped into him, cascading around his body. He could feel himself dying, feel the effects on his body as the dark magic seeped into him, cauterising his flesh. A thin stream of smoke arose from his body as he convulsed madly, his mind ablaze with agonising pain, his mouth wordlessly opening and closing as his body succumbed to the magic and started to die...

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Harry lay trapped in a cascading wave of dark chaotic power, which dug into his form, scalding flesh and singing hair. Pain swept over his mind, sinking into every crevice of his brain as uncontrollable spasms twisted his body unable to move from the staircase. His face was contorted into a mixture of agony and helplessness and despite all of Harry's training; he could feel a dark hole in his mind just within reach where he could go to be safe, where the harsh pain of the outside world couldn't touch him. It beckoned and beckoned as his body jerked in pain under the throes of powerful dark magic, until he was less of a hole and more of a void that threatened to suck him in. The part of his mind that lay beyond pain and pleasure, the cold, analytical and logical section knew that if he submerged his mind into the void then he would never return, he would resemble the victims of the Cruciatus curse who had snapped and gone insane, lost to the waking world. But the other parts begged for relief, needed it badly, needed to escape this horrible agonising pain that was beyond anything Harry had faced before.

Suddenly, the pain was gone and Harry could distantly feel his body flying through the air, landing in a crumpled heap at the bottom of the stairways. A familiar feeling washed over him, one that he always recognised and associated with Dumbledore and Hogwarts, but it was weaker than he remembered. The feeling seemed to stroke his forehead, ruffling his sweat covered hair, before fading away, leaving Harry to face reality alone. With pained green eyes, Harry slowly looked up, grunting at the effort of moving. He was in the hallway outside the Headmaster's office, which had closed up once again, and out of the trap. As he staggered up, Harry's pain-stricken mind raced to analyse what had just happened. The nearest he could guess was that Hogwarts, the unbound part, had used her miniscule power to free him, to save his life.

"Intruder!" Somebody screamed loudly, but without emotion. "There is an intruder outside the Headmaster's office!"

Harry jerked his head up. A ghost wearing a Death Eater's grab was pointing at him, his dead eyes blank as he raised the alarm. With a grunt of effort, Harry flicked his wand, making three shaky movements that were impeded by his quivering hands. With a loud screech, the ghost disappeared in a puff of white smoke, dispelled but not destroyed.

Harry quickly staggered away from the Headmasters office, moving slowly in wavering steps. After a few dozen paces, he groaned in pain and leant against the wall, resting his sweaty and heated forehead again the stone. His entire body throbbed with a constant dull ache and Harry could feel that his magic had been weakened considerably. Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out two vials of a bluish-purple colour and opening them up, he downed the two in a single gulp. Instantly, Harry could feel the pain in his body dimming and his magic slightly



strengthening and straightened up. He needed to get out of the castle immediately. But that was easier said than done. Although the potions Harry had consumed had helped, they did not totally remove all of his weakness. Rather, they worked like a shot of adrenaline, boosting his reflexes and magic, but only for a limited time. They were a standard carryon for all Raiding teams because unlike most potions, they did not generate any magical aura that could be detected.

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Avery scowled, her beautiful features twisting as she regarded the gargoyle guarding the Headmasters office. Behind her, two robed and masked Death Eaters stood still, while another worked quickly, waving his ebony wand in a series of advanced detection spells. Avery sighed with impatience, fixing the wand-wielding Death Eater with an icy stare, her blue eyes flashing angrily. The Death Eater gulped and stopped waving his wand.

"The inner wards don't seem to have been disturbed," He said. "But there's a chance that somebody activated the outer rat-catcher. I'd say the bastard was in there or about a minute."

Avery raised an eyebrow at that. The rat-catcher was a particular nasty ward created by the Dark Lord himself. When caught in it, it was said that the pain the victim suffered was just as bad as the Cruciatus Curse, if not worse. Only an extremely powerful witch or wizard could have broken free, and as far as Avery knew, she only knew two wizards with such power.

"You say that somebody was caught in the rat-catcher for an entire minute, yet there is no body nearby," She said coolly. "There are very few wizards who have the fortitude to continue moving after such a shock, the Dark Lord and Potter being the only two I can name."

"Potter? Potter's here?" One of the Death Eater's behind her exclaimed incredulously. "He's good, but he's not that good to get past the Hogwarts wards."

The Death Eater paled at his dangerous tone, taking an unconscious step backwards. "I'm just telling you what I've detected."

Avery nodded slowly, halting her companions objections.. "Very well," She said. "Send a message to initiate a search. All Death Eaters are to search the castle, floor by floor, room by room. After the castle has been searched, send a team to inspect the outer grounds."

The Death Eater nodded and placed his wand on his temple, screwing his eyes shut as he concentrated. After a few seconds, the tip of his wand glowed in a

silvery hue and with a grand flourish; he sent a silvery misty light akin to a weak Patronus, through the wall.

"You two, come with me," Avery ordered to the Death Eater's behind her. "If Potter is here, we must catch him!"

Avery stalked off with one of the Death Eater's, while the other lingered back.

"And you. If we find nothing, I will place you in the rat catcher for a minute and see how far you get." He whispered harshly.

The Death Eater's eyes went wide with shock and his chin trembled.

From up the hall, Avery whirled around, her dirty blonde hair sweeping through the air like a billowing cloak.

"When I say search, I mean search *now!*" She snapped. The Death Eaters jumped to attention and quickly strode into their search pattern, fearful of their superiors wrath.

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Harry waited silently under a powerful invisibility charm as a portrait slowly scanned the hallway he was in carefully, before turning around and walking into another frame beyond Harry's sight. Slowly, he silently walked from underneath the shadow of a large suit of armour and turned into the next hall, trying in vain to ignore the tingles of pain that kept sweeping his body. All of the healing charms he knew had not had much of an effect and he knew that powerful dark magic lingered in his body, doing nothing but harm.

Suddenly his small crystal grew warm and Harry carefully pulled it out of his robes, which were visible only thanks to his heavily charmed glasses. The crystal was let off two small pulses of weak light and Harry's face grew grim. Ron had detected more activity than usual and Harry felt sure that the Death Eaters were scouring the castle for the intruder. He could not be caught or detected like this, not in his weakened state. He would be no match for the twelve Death Eaters stationed at the school at the moment. With a look of determination that few could see, Harry walked briskly through the darkened hallways of Hogwarts, the only sign of his fatigue and injuries present in his slight limp. The feel of the evil magic radiating off the Horcrux in his robes was enough to spurn him on when he wanted to rest.

Avery and her burly Death Eater companion walked softly down the hallway. The Death Eater next to her was waving his wand absently, viewing a small trail of red and gold sparks with narrowed eyes. Somebody had performed a restricted invisibility charm, a powerful piece of magic only the most capable of wizards and

witches could perform. Whoever they were dealing with, it wasn't a student, which meant that there was an unlicensed wizard or witch on the premises.

"Snape's going to get it now," The large blonde Death Eater said softly, grinning maliciously with broken teeth. "Letting an intruder in like this...The Dark Lord..."

"Will execute you if you reveal our intentions to whoever may be under that invisibility charm!" Avery cut in with a low hiss.

The Death Eater grinned at her and waved his wand in an elaborate manner, muttering a few choice Latin phrases under his breath. The tip of his wand glowed and cackled with yellow bolts of magic that shot off into the walls on either side. "I invented this spell myself," he said proudly. "If you tie it into the ward, it'll reveal anything within a thirty metre distance. Watch." The walls suddenly sparked with yellow luminous light, which flashed in a series of bursts as it shot down the hallway, driving back the darkness. Avery looked quite impressed, sending her colleague a rare look of praise, before she stiffened. She felt the man next to her do the same as down the hall, the yellow magical light flashed onto a section of air and turned light red. The air rippled, sparkling in a rainbow-coloured hue as a shroud of invisibility was torn aside, revealing a black-robed figure with messy dark hair flecked with a light scattering of grey and hardened emerald eyes framed behind a set of round glasses.

"Harry Potter!" The man whispered with shock.

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Harry grimaced as his invisibility shroud was torn away with ease, feeling impressed with the spell work despite the inconvenience. He faced the two Death Eaters, his wand hung loosely in his right hand by his side. He noted the tall burly blonde man, remembering his face from a report he got from his spy as being a terrific magical tracker and curse breaker. The women on the left though, made Harry blink.

"Avery?" He asked slowly, a small smile coming over his face. "And here I was thinking you had died at Malfoy Mansion."

"It will take a far greater wizard than you to kill me," Avery responded coldly, motioning quickly with her right hand and both she and the male Death Eater approached him, splitting up and moving to both sides, ready to attack at a moment's instance.

"Haven't you heard?" Harry asked lightly. "I am the greatest wizard in Britain, superior to everybody else, including you half-blooded inferior piece of muggle filth, Voldemort."

"How dare you..." The male Death Eater started, his voice tinged with rage at the insults directed to the one wizard who respected more than his own father.

Harry's wand suddenly blurred as it swung into action and there was a flash of blinding golden light and a noise much like a gunshot as a bolt of sizzling magic erupted from the tip, lancing towards the Death Eater as Harry gave a powerful underhanded sweep. Golden sparks rained to the ground as the Death Eater was struck, collapsing to the ground as his wand was vaporised underneath a wave of cackling energy. Avery raised her wand as Harry swung his back to her, his gaze deadly serious, while the fallen Death Eater moaned in pain, his barely conscious brain noting what was happening

"It's quite sad how easy it is to manipulate Death Eaters," Harry said quietly, his face set in stone. "Although it seems that you're not similarly affected."

Avery said nothing but she tensed, her body coiling in readiness to strike out. Harry could see her eyes scan over her companion and then himself. Suddenly, realisation swept through her eyes and her posture relaxed as she smiled coldly and smugly.

"So, you were caught in the Rat Catcher," She said in a smooth voice, eyeing him with unhidden delight.

"Rat Catcher?" Harry repeated. "So that's what you called that ward. I'll admit, it's a very nasty piece of magic, though I was able to easily break free."

"Liar!" Avery said in a voice little above a whisper. "I can see it in you. You're tired, you're hurt...*you're in pain!* Your weak and you can barely stand on your own power."

Harry didn't react to her words but he did take a small step backwards, feeling wary of the woman in front of him.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" Avery suddenly hissed. A coil of dark magic zapped from her wand missing Harry as he dove to the side. Although he muttered no incantation, a dark blue spell whooshed from his wand, frosty icicles spiralling madly towards the Death Eater, who raised her wand and wordlessly conjured a physical shield. A dark red metallic shield appeared in her right hand, shimmering with suppressed heat. The icy blast simply melted as it smashed upon the shield and blocked a flurry of low-level beams and blasts of light with ease.

This gave Harry the time to jump back to his feet again and he moved quickly, flicking his wand in a series of sharp gestures while dodging an orb of cackling purple magic. With each flick, a thin slither of gleaming silvery magic shot out towards Avery, a dozen in total. Avery raised her shield in response and although the first six or seven silver bolts were deflected, cracks appeared on the shield

and it shattered in her hands. But Avery was quick and she jumped back, waving her wand and summoning a powerful globe of shimmering bronze magic to envelop her, while moving onto her next offensive spell.

As the last four or so bolts and Harry's subsequent roaring beam of crimson magic crumpled on her advanced shielding charm, a sickly purple and green streak of light lanced towards Harry, who back-pedalled quickly, ducking under the curse that would have infected him with several highly deadly plagues. As he rose, he wordlessly summoned a nearby suit of armour, directing it at Avery, who noticed his intentions and swiped her wand with ease, deflecting the flying hunk of metal with a shower of red sparks.

"You're looking a little tired," Avery said, grinning mockingly at her opponent from behind her shield. "Would you like a rest?"

Harry said nothing but levelled his wand at her. "*Avada Kedavra!*" He hissed, his mind focussed on the intent of death. But instead of the normal coil of blinding green light and the roaring wind that accompanied it, a splatter of green sparks spat from the tip of his wand in a small breeze. Although the sparks broke through Avery's shield without any problems, they died out as they did so. Harry sagged, drained and tired, but he kept his mind fully focussed on the duel.

"Tsk, ts, tsk," Avery said softly. "You can't even produce a decent Killing Curse. And to think, this is the most feared wizard of the 21st century."

Harry responded with a ball of suppressed lightning and Avery conjured another globe of glowing bronze magic. The ball exploded violently on the shield with the noise of a thunderclap and small cackles of lightning rained down on the shield, which shimmered madly as it absorbed and neutralised the offensive magic. Another sickly green and purple streak of light zoomed towards Harry, who, too tired to dodge, batted it away with a glowing wand tip, the motion flowing on into a whip-like movement. A blazing whip of yellow and red fire spat from his wand, flicking through the air as Harry expertly whipped it across the shield.

Avery staggered, her shield flaring up at the powerful flaming whip. She managed to stay upright as Harry drew the whip back and cracked it at the shield again. This time Avery lost her balance and stumbled, veering to her left and leaning against the wall. She dispelled her shield just as the whip cracked again, the fiery conjuration radiating an intense heat as it missed her by mere inches. She threw herself to her right, rolling over and coming to a stop at a crouch. A jet of silver-streaked magic erupted from her wand, only to be batted aside by Harry with his blazing coil of fire.

As Avery sent forward a barrage of streaks and blasts of light, Harry flicked the whip back towards himself. The fiery length flew back, coiling around the tip of his wand and forming a shield of flames, which Harry used to block the incoming

curses. As Avery prepared another barrage, Harry flicked his wand and the large fiery shield was banished towards Avery with a grand flourish. Avery widened her eyes and rolled to her right, feeling the heat of the fiery shield as it passed by her. As she came to a crouch, she suddenly noticed that Harry, in his fatigue, had extended himself on the last spell and his shoulder and the lower part of his back was exposed. Harry knew it as well as realisation flooded his eyes.

Time seemed to move slowly for both duellers. Harry started to draw back his shoulder, his meagre magical reserves already forming into a shielding charm. His green eyes locked onto Avery's blue eyes and she felt his Legillimency, which was of moderate skill but severely lacking when it came to her own, enter her mind. For a moment their gazes locked, minds meeting and battling. Avery knocked aside his probe and in what seemed like an eternity, flicked her wand to the slightest degree, the fastest and one of the most powerful spells flaring from the tip. Her lips rolled around the syllables and Harry tensed his body, his wand moving back in a futile attempt to block the next spell.

*"Crucio!"*

From the tip of Avery's wand came a flash of crimson light that zapped towards Harry, breaking through his barely formed silvery globe of magic and striking him deep into his shoulder. Harry tensed and let loose a cry of pain as the Unforgivable struck him. The feeling of a thousand white hot knives digging into his body overcame his mind with blaring pain too intense for rational thought to ignore. While wizards of Harry's calibre were able to partially ignore lower level pain curses, the Unforgivable broke all barriers within the mind, neutralising the endorphins that stimulated pleasure while increasing the maximum pain levels the body could take. To be put simple, no wizards or witch had ever been able simply ignore the Cruciatus Curse.

He fell to the ground, a loud hiss of pain emerging from his mouth as he dropped to his knees, his wand falling from his twitching hand. His entire body was shuddering in agony, his brain barely functioning. He tried in vain to keep his eyes focussed on Avery, to draw on his wandless magical skills to stop the pain, but they blurred with unshed tears of anguish as drool dripped down his chin, and he fell to the ground in a twitching shuddery heap, his head lolling to the side.

He had only been under the curse for twenty seconds, but it had felt like an eternity as pain pulsed through his system. His mind, barely capable of conscious thought at this point, registered a dark blur in his vision, and somewhere in the back of his brain, he identified the blur as a suit of armour. As he thrashed on the ground, he managed to raise a single hand and with the last efforts of his normal consciousness, drew on his magic and summoned it.

For Avery, she watched impassively as the figure on the ground thrashed before her very eyes. Her blue eyes were hard, her face stony and determined and her

knuckles gripped tightly on her wand, keeping the Cruciatus flowing to incapacitate the wizard before her. Next to her, the other Death Eater had managed to get to his knees and was watching the spectacle with pleasure-filled eyes, his face alight with dark enjoyment. Suddenly, a suit of armour standing silently along the wall close to Harry was magically tugged from its spot and summoned towards the figure on the ground. Avery's eyes widened as the flow of the Cruciatus Curse was interrupted by a layer of shiny metal and watched as the figure on the floor stopped thrashing.

Harry felt the absence of the Cruciatus Curse as soon as the armour blocked it and couldn't help a huge sigh of shaky relief exit his mouth. He glanced up, his body still twitching in the after-effects of the curse and with a quick gesture of his palm, banished the armour at the two Death Eaters. Avery gave a cry of surprise, automatically sending out a blast of destructive magic from her wand that caused the armour to explode in a ball of fire, but the shrapnel tore into her hastily raised shield, tearing through the weakest parts away from her face and torso and impaling her arms and legs with dozens of shiny metal splinters. The other Death Eater, on his hands and knees, was too low to be struck but Harry managed to stagger up, his wand zooming into his hand, and level it at him.

*"Re...Refgra!"* Harry intoned in a weary and exhausted voice, his mind to dazed and wracked with pain in order to wordlessly cast the bone-breaking spell.

The Death Eater howled in pain as a crackling grey curse enveloped his arms and he collapsed to the ground as they were noisily broke, loud snaps echoing in the darkened corridors. As he fell, Avery, with blood leaking from her four limbs, tried to shakily raise her wand, but Harry wearily lashed out with his wand, a diagonal downward stroke that Avery felt as a blow to the head, and she collapsed to the ground, barely conscious.

Without giving the Death Eater's another thought, Harry staggered away from them, disappearing into the dark corridor with a heavy limp, his wand held loosely in his right hand and leaving two wounded Death Eater's lying in the middle of the hallway.

---

Draco Malfoy stood in the entrance hall as the last of the newly summoned Death Eaters disappeared into the school in groups of three. Dressed in fine green and silver silk robes and covered with a brilliant white fur coat, he shivered at the coldness and wandlessly and wordlessly conjured a warming charm around himself and his wife, Pansy, who stood next to him in a revealing and expensive sleek azure and white dress robe and laden with expensive jewels, including a particularly beautiful golden amethyst necklace.

"Draco dear, do you really think it's...*him*?" She asked him, tossing dark curly ringlets out of her face.

Draco frowned, his face worried. "Merlin, I hope not," He said. "Or else Severus is going to be in a lot of trouble. Honestly, I don't think that Potter would attack Hogwarts. As far as I know, there's nothing here for him to gain."

"That just goes to show Draco, that you know very little," Somebody whispered in a cold voice.

Draco whirled around, his wand whipping out with and casting a split-second spell, a disarming charm that rocketed from his wand with great speed, while preparing to cast a powerful dark curse. He never got the chance as the figure stepped out of the shadows; his wand held high and *caught* the spell in his left hand with a muttered incantation, throwing it straight to Draco, who realised his mistake too late as his wand was ripped from his hand and he was pushed not-to-gently back.

The wand flew threw the air and landed in the palm of Harry Potter, who emerged from the shadows with gleaming emerald eyes, watching Pansy fumble with her wand in terror. It only took a slight flick and a murmured spell to disarm her as well, sending her wand skidding along the length of the entrance hall.

"Potter!" Draco hissed, half in anger, half in fear. His pale blue eyes watched the dangerous man in front of his very carefully.

"Draco," Potter responded carefully, tiredness carefully but not completely hidden in his voice. He glanced at Pansy, his eyes raking her form, and for a moment Draco could have sworn that his lips curled into a truly warm and genuine smile that spoken of hidden secrets and portrayed a certain *understanding* that Draco didn't understand. But it was gone before Draco could be fully sure that it was there.

"That's a lovely necklace you have their Pansy," Potter noted, his face blank. "I, ah, always knew that purple looked good on you."

Pansy flushed and Draco was horrified to know that he couldn't tell if it was due to fear or embarrassment.

"Mr Malfoy, Mrs Malfoy, I bid you a good night," Potter drawled and limped to the open doors, his eyes carefully flicking over Draco. As Draco watched him go, Potter threw his wand to the ground and just before he exited into the dark grounds, he turned around and threw him a quick wink. Pansy blinked as Potter left and watched Draco jump to his feet, his wand zooming into his hand from across the hall.

"Call the Death Eaters and Aurors," He managed to utter to his wife.



Pansy watched him carefully as he stared outside with a neutral expression, and then strode to the nearest fireplace, throwing in a handful of powder and watching the flames flare green as she contacted the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.

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Ron watched the castle anxiously from a dark enclosure within the Forbidden Forest, his mind furiously wrestling the possibility that Harry had been captured, or worse, killed. The kidnapped student that had been transfigured into an animal had been placed into a cage and shrunk, and now resided in his dark and scorched battle robes. As he was debating with himself whether to go back into the castle, despite Harry's strict instructions and orders, a dark figure staggered into the tiny clearing and Ron sighed with relief as he recognised Harry and stepped out from the darkness, revealing himself.

"Harry!" he hissed softly.

Harry looked up at him with tired and pained emerald eyes and Ron hitched a breath at Harry's condition. He was shuddering slightly, a tell-tale sign of Cruciatus exposure, and his face was pale and clammy. A faint trickle of blood was dripping from his nose and he could barely walk, his wand held loosely in his hand.

"We need to leave, now!" Harry muttered, darting his head behind him.

"Did you get it?" Ron asked quickly as he summoned two broomsticks from the foliage, once again courtesy of Harry's secret spy.

"Yeah," Harry said tiredly, blinking rapidly as he eyed the broomstick. "But there was some...trouble in getting out, and I got...held up."

"I'll say," Ron muttered, worry thick in his voice. "Will you be able to fly?"

"It's only two-hundred metres...to get past...the wards," Harry murmured. "I...can make it that...far."

Ron nodded and watched Harry carefully as both wizards mounted their broomsticks. With a gentle push, two dark blurs shot from the ground and into the deep forbidden forest. After a few minutes of careful flying, Harry felt his skin tingle as they past the wards and knew that Aurors and Death Eaters would be apparating in a matter of seconds.

"Raise the mark!" He managed to bellow as the two shot to the ground, reaching for his portkey.

Ron nodded and raised his wand, bellowing the incantation and gripped his own portkey. A huge fiery red and golden phoenix riding in a clear blue sky amidst white fluffy clouds shot into the sky as the two wizards disappeared as their portkeys activated. It was the flaming mark that greeted the Aurors and Death Eaters that apparated in seconds later, pouring into the forbidden forest in a flurry of black and blue robes.

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Adrian Pucey was relatively young wizard in the mid forties, with dark brown hair, light blue eyes and a permanent sneer on his face that reflected his status and wealth. Despite that, Adrian was not an evil wizard. He did his job, managing the finances of the entire Ministry of Magic, loved his wife, Helen, a former Durmstrung student, and doted on his only daughter, Daphne. His loyalty to Lord Voldemort was only surpassed by the love he carried for his family and as he sat down at the grand oak table in the dining room, he was about to realise that soon he had to choose between the two.

At the moment, Adrian was absorbed in the newspaper in front of him, ignoring his rich English breakfast of bacon, scrambled eggs and fried tomatoes as he stared unblinkingly at the front page. However, he was drawn from his stupor as a dozen or so owls emerged from the gigantic roof in a tumble and whirlwind of feathers and hoots. One particular barn owl let out an annoyingly loud screech as it dropped its letter on the table and Adrian winced, glaring at the bird angrily as it flew away. What really got his attention was the red-feathered hawk, an uncommon but not impossible postal bird, which swooped down and settled on the table before his raven haired wife, who took the scroll of parchment strapped to the bird's leg with a delicate hand.

Adrian watched as she opened it and scanned it, noting the way her eyes widened with horror and her cheeks paled with fright. As a tear trickled down her face, he hurriedly stood up and strode quickly around the table.

"What's wrong?" He asked her in concern.

She merely handed him the letter, which he took and read, his face paling after each word.

### *Pucey Household*

*This is the Order of Phoenix. We have your daughter, Daphne Pucey, the true reason behind last night's raid. Her professors, and by default the Ministry, has been led to believe that you retrieved her last night in order to present her to a possible spouse. DO NOT INFORM THEM OTHERWISE. We both know that the Ministry and Lord Voldemort cares little for others and should they be informed, you would all be executed for treason and Daphne would have her mind ripped*

*out in order to discover the various details of Azkaban she may have come across.*

*This something we all want to prevent and it is in both our interests to resolve this quickly and more importantly, quietly.*

*In exchange for your daughter, we want 650,000 Galleons. As Head of Magical Economics, I am confident that you will be able to procure this money easily, although it would be wise if you left Britain soon afterwards. Lord Voldemort does not take kindly to betrayal and eventually he will find out.*

*We will send you the transaction point in four days. Rest assured that no harm, both physical and mental, will come to your daughter in that time. If you do not meet our price, I will be hard pressed to assure you of this again. On the third day, at midnight, the hawk will return. If you are unable to procure these funds within the allotted timetable, inform us of how much you are able to obtain, and we may be able to negotiate. However, we will know if you're lying- our people are everywhere. Do not forget that.*

*Harry Potter*

*Commander of the Order of Phoenix*

*Azkaban Island*

*"Merlin!" He breathed as he stared down at the attached lock of black hair. Even though he had not cast any detection and identity spells, he knew without a doubt that Daphne was in the hands of the Order of Phoenix. He collapsed into the chair next to his sobbing wife, placing a hand over his face in shock and horror. "Merlin, help us all."*

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## **The Daily Prophet**

### ***Hogwarts Raided by Harry Potter***

### ***Infamous Criminal Wounded Badly***

*By special correspondent Maria Skeeter*

*Department of Media Affairs*

*Last night, the once thought impenetrable wards of Hogwarts were breached by the infamous criminal, Harry Potter. Although his motives remain unclear, it has been learnt that during the raid Harry Potter was struck down by respected Death*

*Eater Linden Avery with a Cruciatus Curse and wounded badly. Without proper treatment, specialist Healers have theorised that some of the spell damage inflicted upon Potter could have permanent effects. This marks a joyous day for the Wizarding World as the possibility that Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix may be close to defeat...*

*.....Linden Avery, daughter of Marcus Avery, a decorated war hero of the Dark Lord's revolution, is expected to be awarded an Order of Salazar Slytherin for her continued bravery against the Order of Phoenix. Avery, aged 26, confronted Potter during a recent raid against Malfoy Manner, home to the Head of the Magical Law Enforcement and Head of the Disposal of Renegades, where she was severely injured in the line of duty. Only days later, she was again part of the elite team that drove the Order of Phoenix off the island prison of Morsmordre, where several Aurors were brutally hacked in their sleep. This latest confrontation again adds to Avery's already impressive retaliation and she is fast on the track in becoming a hero.....*

*.....Draco Malfoy, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, was also present on the scene and personally drove Potter through out of the castle and into the grounds. Both he and his wife have already been personally commended by the Dark Lord Himself, and are also expecting a declaration to praise their heroic efforts. Mr Malfoy met with the press late last night and assured the Wizarding world that everything was under control. It was expected that.....*

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## **Salem Scrolls**

### ***Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix Strike Again!***

*Harry Potter, known worldwide for his infamous rebellion against the self-styled Lord Voldemort, leader of the British Ministry of Magic, is at it again. This time, his latest escapade involved the infiltration of the famed Hogwarts School of Dark Arts, Britains most advanced centre for magical education. Harry Potter, aged 40, has slowly escalated in raids and attacks from his island fortress Azkaban in the past few weeks, resulting in hundreds of British Auror casualties.*

*In the United States, there has been a considerable fan base for Harry Potter and his cause. Harry Potter, a former Auror and protégé of the famed Albus Dumbledore, an internationally recognised wizard of good, has received both blinding criticism and praise for his efforts against the despotic ruler of Britain. Although certain sections of the Warlock's Congress speak harshly against Potter's actions, many others praise him for taking a stand against so obvious an evil.*

*William Reilly, a member of the Institute of International Cooperation, had this to say.*

*"Honestly, we're not getting involved. Both Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort are very powerful wizards and there are few that rival them out of Britain. Hell, Voldemort is widely considered to be immortal, for God's sake! How the hell do we fight against an army led by an immortal wizard? And Harry Potter, well, we've all heard the rumours about him. Let them fight it out over there and pray to whatever gods you believe in that whoever emerges the victor leaves us alone!"*

*Britain, the world's oldest origin of magic, is considered to contain most of the world's most powerful wizards and witches, and although some American supporters may support Harry Potter and some may rally against him, all will agree that a war with Britain is to be avoided.*

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Deep within the bowels of Azkaban, Filius Flitwick and half a dozen skilled curse-breakers stood in a large darkened room, staring at something intently. Moisture dripped from the cold rocky walls and only a few floating lanterns lit up the current object of interest. An ancient sneakoscope lay innocently on a stone pedestal, but Filius knew what it truly was and was treating it carefully.

"Alright everybody," He squeaked seriously. "Let's destroy this abomination!"

Slowly, the curse-breakers circled the pedestal and raised their wands, preparing for the gruelling task of destroying one of Lord Voldemort's heavily warded and protected Horcruxes.

The Azkaban hospital wing was not like all hospital wings. Although it had the smell of the same common disinfectant potions and the feel of the same sterilization and healing spells as most hospital wings, it was ran by Luna Lovegood, an Order member well known for her quirkiness that dated back to her Hogwarts times. Instead of the usual white-coloured tiles, Luna had replaced them with vibrant pink blocks, which clashed horribly with the fluorescent yellow curtains and the gaudy crimson bed sheets.

Harry had resided in this hospital wing three days after his recent excursion to Hogwarts, recovering from the temporary after-effects of the Cruciatus Curse and the more serious repercussions of the 'rat catcher' ward he had been caught up in. On a small table next to his bed lay an assorted pile of homemade sweets and get-well cards. This brought a reminiscent smile to Harry's face every time he glanced at them and occasionally he would take one as he poured over a thick scroll full of tiny angular writing, frowning often as he read through it.

This was the site that greeted Ron as he entered the hospital wing, grimacing faintly at Luna's different approach to decorating. The scarred redhead observed his injured friend concentrating intently on his work and opened his mouth to speak.

"Hello Ron," Harry said calmly, his eyes not leaving the scroll.

Ron closed his mouth in surprise, before scratching his head and giving a resigned grin.

"Harry," He greeted. "That had better not be work," He said as he dragged a seat over to Harry's bed, gesturing to the scroll.

Harry didn't say a word, but Ron caught the bare flash of truth in his friend's eyes and sighed.

"I thought Luna told you to lay off for a week or so," Ron said bluntly.

Harry shrugged slightly. "It has to be done," He said simply. "And since I'm lying around without anything to do..."

"The point of your rest is so that you can recover," Ron said, rolling his eyes in annoyance. "Stress, Luna said, is a hindrance to your recovery and you get stressed when you work." Ron stated firmly and tried to wrench the scroll from Harry's hands to no avail. After a few seconds of tugging between the two men, Ron sighed and gave up, slumping into his seat.

"I need to finish this," Harry said firmly. He bent his head over the scroll again, but then looked up again with a slight look of annoyance on his face. "And I am not stressed."

"Harry, you're stressed," Ron said bluntly.

"I am not," Harry repeated firmly, which led Ron to heave an exasperated sigh.

"You have grey hair, Harry," Ron said, gesturing to the strands of grey hair hidden amongst Harry's messy black hair. "Not even muggles get grey hair in their forties."

"Some do," Harry argued back, dropping the scroll onto his lap. "Besides, I like the grey hair. It makes me look more distinguished and handsome, don't you think?"

"I really hope you don't want an honest answer for that," Ron said, looking away with a hint of a smile curling his lips.

"You don't find me beautiful anymore?" Harry said, widening his eyes theatrically and slapping a hand over his heart.

Ron gave a growl of annoyance tinged with humour. "I'm married, you know," He remarked with a laugh.

"You never told me that!" Harry said with faked shock in his voice.

"What did Ronald never tell you, Harry dear?" A dreamy voice inquired from the other end of the bizarre hospital wing.

Both Harry and Ron turned their heads to see Luna walking towards them. Her wide perpetually-surprised eyes gazed at them unblinkingly. Behind her, a man and a woman dressed in the grubby brown robes of the Azkaban Guards followed, mud splattered on their faces. The male was sporting a broken nose and the female was nursing her arm.

"He never told me he was married," Harry answered her slyly. "He raised my hopes and dashed them without a second thought."

Ron gaped at him, the tips of his ears turning red. "Wha...?" He began, but trailed off on stunned surprise.

"Ronald!" Luna scowled, shaking her head sadly. "Hermione will be disappointed to learn that you were having an affair."

"Affair?" Ron squeaked out, his cheeks suffusing with red.

"Woe is my heart Ron," Harry tried to say seriously, but a mischevious smile came over his face and he let loose a small chuckle.

"Harry, if you say another word I swear to Merlin that I will transfigure you into a roll of toilet paper and leave you next to the chamber pots," Ron said, but his eyes were laughing.

"Dear Harry, I do hope that that scroll does not pertain to work," Luna said suddenly as she took in the scroll on his blanket-covered legs.

"Actually, it does," Harry said and watched as a second later the scroll zoomed from his lap and into Luna's outstretched hand. He watched with certain resignation as she walked to her desk and placed the scroll in a charmed and locked drawer. Luna gave him a piercing look before turning to her new patients, directing them to lie down on the beds and walking to the large potions cabinet.

"You know, technically I outrank her," Harry mused out loud, eyeing the drawer carefully. "And I could easily break through her warded desk."

"I don't know, this is Luna, remember?" Ron asked. "I still remember some of the...er, *unique*, spells and wards she created for us. I wouldn't want to even look at that drawer in a funny way."

Harry glanced at the drawer one last time with a speculative look in his eyes before he sighed and looked away. "How's the kid, Daphne?"

"Scared, confused, worried," Ron said, narrowing his eyes a little at Harry as his mind flashed back to their latest argument regarding her. "And very angry. The last time I was in her cell, she tried to fight me."

"I hope she didn't beat you up to bad," Harry said mildly.

"I got scratches all over my arms," Ron muttered darkly. "I'm surprised she wasn't a Gryffindor."

Harry nodded thoughtfully and then looked to his left as the two wounded guards approached his bed, their wounds already healed by Luna's powerful healing magic and Ginny's superb potions.

"Um...sir?" The male, a brown haired, blue eyed man in his mid-twenties asked hesitantly. "We hope...all of the guards...hope you get better soon."

The female, a blonde woman of about 35 nodded as the male blushed under Harry's powerful scrutiny, before looking immensely as Harry smiled.

"Thankyou Derek," Harry said softly. "And you too Hannah, of course."

The two people looked surprise that he knew their names and quickly scattered off, watched by an amused-looking Ron.



"I think that it's not fair that people like you more than they like me," He grumbled good-naturedly.

"Well, that's always how it's been," Harry retorted and smiled a touch bitterly. "But to even it up, more people hate me than they hate you."

Ron nodded. "That's true." He agreed. He reached into his satchel and pulled out a chessboard. "Game? I've got a couple of hours before I have to leave in my animagus form for the Pucey residence."

Harry shuddered. "Alright," he agreed reluctantly. "But only because you need an ego boosting."

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### *That Night*

Daphne Pucey sat in her glorified cell, sitting on the comfortable queen-sized bed with a furious expression on her face. She had been locked in this room for three days, trapped within the comfortable confines without a single word of why she was here and why they had captured her. Some part of her, the cold and rational part, argued that it could be much worse, that there was no torture and that she was fed decently for a prisoner. The same part argued that she should be relieved that the infamous Order of Phoenix didn't have any sordid desires for her, but whenever Daphne thought about that she shuddered in fear of the possibility. The young Ravenclaw had decided that she could either be scared of her wits or angry beyond all belief and she had chosen to be angry, if only to deny her captors the pleasure of seeing her fear.

So far, there hadn't been many visitors. A red-haired and heavily scarred man she had recognised as Ron Weasley had visited her earlier but he hadn't even been able to even get a word out of his mouth before she attacked him, scratching at him with her long nails and hissing like a cat. Her attack lasted mere seconds before she was blown away from him with a mild wandless banishing charm and while Ron had looked angry, he had merely muttered under his breath and stalked out of the room, slamming the door loudly. So here she sat and waited for her next visitor, anger brimming in her tiny form. But when the door opened, her anger vanished as Harry Potter stepped into the room, his green eyes sparkling with soft amusement, and fear settled in.

"Hello Daphne," Harry said as he entered, waving his hand and wandlessly closing the door. "I hope that you find your room acceptable. We had the Ravenclaw colours especially added for you."

Daphne was staring at him with wide eyes, her mouth opening and closing mutely. As he approached, she backed up on her bed, swallowing nervously as he came closer.

"Are you going to rape me?" She blurted out quickly.

Harry started, his eyes going wide and his composure slipping for a second as incredibility and shock washed over his face. He literally gaped at the twelve year old girl for a second, before closing his mouth and letting an amused smile curl his lips.

"My, you are a bold one," He said, chuckling slightly. "No Daphne, I am not going to rape you."

"Oh," Daphne uttered in relief. "That's...That's good then."

Harry continued chuckling as he flicked his wand, drawing up a large comfortable chair and settling down in it with a small relieved sigh. "Ah, that's much better," He murmured, glancing at Daphne, who stared stunned at the ease he had conjured the chair. "In our mission to Hogwarts, I was injured. Luna only let me out of the hospital wing because I promised her that I'd bring her a mutated battle bunny. I have absolutely no idea what a mutated battle bunny is, so I'll just conjure a normal rabbit and turn it green or give it a second head."

Daphne stared at the supposedly evil-incarnate man in front of her, cocking her head as she regarded the most hated wizard of this century. Somehow, the relaxed and easy-going man in front of her didn't appear to be the bloodthirsty monster she had heard the rumours about. For one, he hadn't replaced his two front teeth with sharp golden plates so he could gnaw on human flesh, and his form was lacking in the many deformities she had heard he had.

"But I should get on to the point of my visit. I am here, Daphne, to answer any questions you may have," Harry said, wriggling into his chair while he watched the girl in front of him. "My friend, Ron, said that you had been very angry about your situation here the last time he visited, so I thought I had better come and personally speak to you about it. Your situation here, I mean, although if you do wish to speak about your anger problems, we have an excellent Mind-Healer here."

"Why am I here?" Daphne immediately blurted out angrily. "Why did you take me?"

"Money," Harry answered bluntly. "Your father will pay us a large amount of gold for your return. This is about money, Daphne, nothing more and nothing less."

"Gold?" Daphne asked weakly.

Harry sighed, a regretful expression flittering onto his face. "We normally don't resort to these types of measures, but we're getting slightly desperate. I have a lot of people to feed here, and that requires money."

Daphne said nothing, but there was a newly-formed relief in her posture that indicated that her worst fears had been dissipated.

"When...?" Daphne started, before stopping with a gulp. A wave of hysteria washed through her. Here she was, little Daphne Pucey, talking to *Harry Potter*, the biggest traitor and evil wizard in the world. Harry Potter was sitting across from her with a small polite smile on his face and conversing with her pleasantly as if there was nothing wrong.

Harry pretended not to notice the hysteria the young girl was simply *radiating*. "When will we let you go?" He guessed. "If all goes to plan, then you'll be gone by tomorrow."

"Really?" Daphne looked up with hopeful eyes.

"We'll be meeting in a crowded public muggle location," Harry told her. "Your father will give us the gold, we will give him you, we will both go our separate ways and this incident will remain forever secret."

Daphne shivered as his face hardened and his green eyes bored into her own.

"If Voldemort were to ever find out about this, I can guarantee that he will execute your father for aiding us, no matter how reluctantly, murder your mother as an example, and rip your mind apart in order to find out any detail of Azkaban. You must keep this a secret. I have already suggested to your father that you leave Britain once this is over, for your own safety."

Daphne gulped, shivering at his cold, hard face. The man in front of her could easily be the man she had read and heard about, but just as suddenly Harry retreated back into his pleasant façade, wiping his face clear of all the intensity that had been on it seconds ago so well that Daphne half-wondered if she had imagined it.

"I trust that the food has been pleasant?" Harry inquired politely.

Daphne nodded mutely, eyeing him carefully, especially when he stood up and vanished his chair with an easy flick with his wand, that act alone causing Daphne to eye him with a new respect.

"Well Daphne, I hope that this has been enlightening for you," Harry said pleasantly. "Just remember to behave yourself, be patient and hold on for

another day. I give you my personal word that nothing untold will happen to you. If luck is on our side, you'll be with your parents in less than a day."

Daphne watched as the most confusing and contradictory person she had ever met walked out of her room, closing the door behind him. With a sigh, she flopped back onto her bed and tried to get some sleep. She could only hope that Potter was telling the truth, although he had seemed sincere. Perhaps he wasn't so bad after all? As soon as that thought entered her mind, she shook her head roughly, muttering angrily to herself about her traitorous thoughts.

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As Harry was walking back to the hospital wing, where Luna had insisted he stay for another night, he glanced outside one of the numerous windows, watching the starry night. For a moment, Harry could have sworn he saw a dark shape amidst the pale moonlight, and he was right as a reddish-brown hawk screeched loudly as it dived down into Azkaban, entering and gaining approval from the wards and landing on the windowsill of the very window Harry was looking out of. Harry merely cocked an eyebrow at the hawk as it hopped to the floor, beating its thick-feathered wings, and quickly changed into Ron, who shook his head dazedly as he stood up from the ground.

"The mission was successful?" Harry asked him.

Ron nodded. "We have a meeting place set for two pm, tomorrow."

"Excellent," Harry approved. "Daphne would be pleased to hear that."

"Daphne?" Ron asked, scrunching up his nose and sadly emphasising the more hideous of his scars he had. "You're on first-name terms?"

"Oh yes," Harry said mildly. "I just had a nice chat with her. I found her to be quite bold and polite."

"I have scratches on my arm, Harry, deep scratches," Ron muttered crossly. "The girl is an animal."

Harry shrugged and started back to the hospital wing. "Perhaps it's your personality?" He suggested as he was leaving.

Ron watched his retreating back and made a face. "Yeah, you're real funny," He grumbled.

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The next day, Harry and Daphne sat around a small table in a busy muggle mall. Both were dressed in the latest muggle fashions, courtesy of Hermione and her continual contact with her muggle parents who had changed their last name

decades ago as the war heated up and Hermione gained prominence. Daphne was dressed in shiny silver jeans and a glittery purple t-shirt, while Harry was dressed in a more conservative cheap business suit. He was happily chewing on a McDonald's burger, while Daphne was looking at her surroundings with a mixed look of revulsion and curiosity, her inborn prejudice almost matched by her inquisitiveness. Both occupants of the table noticed when Adrian Pucey entered the food court, looking extremely uncomfortable in a pair of ratty blue jeans and a dark shirt made two decades ago. He received some strange looks from the muggles, but he ignored them as he focussed on Harry's table, his eyes widening at the sight of Harry and glistening at the sight of his daughter.

"Don't move," Harry said softly but firmly as Daphne started at the sight of her father, her own eyes tearing up. She obeyed and sat still as Adrian made his way over, taking a seat in the empty chair, losing the attention of the muggles as he did.

"Harry Potter," Adrian said neutrally.

"Adrian Pucey," Harry said around his food, taking a big swallow and wiping his mouth with his hand. "I haven't seen you since our Hogwarts day. You used to play Quidditch, right?"

"That's right," Adrian agreed coldly. "Can we get to business now?"

"Certainly," Harry said with a small polite smile. "You, ah, have the money?"

"Of course," Adrian snapped and reached into his pockets and somehow pulling out a small but bulky bag. He tossed it on the table angrily, sparing another glance at his dark-haired daughter. "It's all there."

Harry said nothing but pulled out his wand. Adrian started and shoved a hand into his pockets before he suddenly froze as magic stiffened his limbs. Daphne gave a small whimper but Harry ignored both father and daughter and waved his wand over the bag, performing a common piece of goblin magic in the harsh tongue. All around them, the muggles ignored them, driven away by the notice-me-not charms and the minor confoundus charms that Harry had previously set up.

After a few seconds, Harry put away his wand, seemingly satisfied. The moment he did, Adrian and Daphne could suddenly move but they sat frozen and eyed Harry with fear as he finished the last of his salty french-fries.

"It was a pleasure doing business with you. I suggest, Adrian, that you listen to the advice we gave you in the letter, or listen to what I told Daphne," Harry said as he stood up. He dispelled the charms and spells around the table and gave one last polite smile before he disappeared into the crowd.

Adrian and Daphne sighed in relief, before Adrian swept his daughter into his arms, clutching her tightly.

"Merlin Daphne," He muttered into her hair. "You had me worried. Did they hurt you? Did they touch you?"

"No daddy," Daphne said, her voice muffled by her father's shirt and her own tears. "They didn't hurt me. They just wanted the money."

Adrian sighed with relief again and stood up. "Let's go home. I have a Healer who I can trust implicitly to give you a confidential check-up, and we need to discuss how we're going to keep this a secret."

Daphne stood up as well, wiping her tears from her eyes and smiling brightly at her normally stern father. "Let's go. I want to see mum."

Adrian smiled and with some subtle flicks with his wand to confound the muggles, he disappeared with his daughter by his side.

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### *That Night*

Harry sat in his brightly lit office again, nursing a small glass of firewhiskey as he rested in his most comfortable chair, easing out the last of his aches. Although he would need to take a potent potion for the next few days, Luna had predicted that he would be fully healed in a week or so, and that there was nothing wrong with him that would impede his performance in the line of duty. Of course, she would only allow him to go when he had fulfilled his promise. As he sat, reading his thick scroll, Christina walked in with a baffled expression on her face and her arms full of scrolls and parchment.

"Sir, is there any reason why Healer Lovegood is walking around with a green rabbit that has two heads and sharp, pointy teeth?" She asked curiously.

Harry cleared his throat. "I promised her," Was all he said, but Christina seemed to accept it as she dropped her load onto the table. Harry's sharp eyes immediately picked out a scroll bound by a silky black string and he summoned it to his hand, unravelling the string while muttering a spell under his breath, his voice grunting in Trollish. He opened the message, ignoring Christina, and started translating in his mind.

*The snake has been frequent at the Ministry of late. Rumour has it that the Dark Lord is working on top-secret project so often that he never leaves- possibly Operation Evanescence, still no clue as to its purpose. The snake feeds everyday at exactly 1:30 in a small office in the Department of the Control of Magical*

*Creatures. I have discreetly arranged for a Floo opening to be accessible in that Department for three days. The password is "Purity".*

*I know of your excursion to Hogwarts and your subsequent injuries and am deeply concerned.*

*Your Most Loyal*

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Once again, the Prime Minister of Britain sat in his office, staring at the fireplace nervously. His hands remained beneath the table and occasionally he eyed the portrait with a funny look, remembering that it had once spoke the last time the representative of the magical world had arrived. As crickets began to chirp outside, the Prime Minister felt his eyes drooping when his fireplace flared with green flame and a dark-robed figure emerged, dusting himself off lightly.

"You're not the person who was here last time," The Prime Minister said and winced as the man looked up. His face seemed to have been butchered by somebody. There was a large and nasty scar that slashed upwards across his left cheek, straight into the man's eyes. A large chunk of this mans nose was missing and somebody had seemingly hacked off this mans right ear.

"Aren't you observant?" The man growled and grinned menacingly. He raised his wand and gave a short flick.

The Prime Minister let out a cry of pain as something white-hot and sharp struck him across the face. He fell from his seat to the ground, landing with a dull thud with a hand pressed against his cheek, shock written over his features.

"You better treat me with a little more respect and change your attitude," The wizard growled darkly. "I think you've been coddled for far too long. You will do as I say and if you don't, you will be punished."

"You can't do this!" The Prime Minister growled as he jumped to his feet, just as the door to his office burst open. Two dark-suited guards rushed in, machine-pistols in their hands. Their quick eyes scanned the room, quickly assessing the situation- the Prime Minister struggling to his feet and a dark-cloaked man aiming some kind of weapon at him. Without any hesitation, they fired.

The room was filled with a soft buzz of silenced gunfire. But the wizard only smirked, the bullets striking a glowing blue shield that had enveloped him the instance the guards had burst into the room. The guards continued firing as the shield rippled as it was struck, disintegrating the flying bullets, while the wizard waved his wand arrogantly, sending a jet of golden glittering sparks through the air.

Suddenly the two guards stopped firing, even though their fingers were still pressed on the trigger. Their guns were now covered in a fine layer of sparkling golden magic, while sparks still lingered in the air. The guards did move fast though and both pulled out a secondary pistol from their holsters, but golden sparks zoomed straight towards the pistols, rendering them useless.

*“Avada Kedavra! Avada Kedavra!”* The wizard spat out. Two coils of deathly green magic burst from his wand, accompanied by the noise of a roaring wind. The two guards were struck in the chest and dropped to the ground, their eyes blank and their faces twisted into a look of horror.

The Prime Minister stared at his dead guards with a look of abject horror, his mind blank with fear. The wizard muttered something under his breath and the two bodies suddenly morphed, shrinking down into two small bones, which were promptly destroyed with another flick.

“You will pay for this insolence,” The Death Eater spat and levelled his wand at the Prime Minister, who gulped, his eyes wide. “But first...” A shower of silver sparks burst from the tip and entered the walls, disappearing with faint sparkling pops. At the same time, the electricity in the room suddenly faded away and the light dimmed.

“What is...?” The Prime Minister started.

*“Crucio!”*

After a few seconds of loud agonising screaming, the Death Eater cut off the curse and snarled wordlessly at the shaking figure on the ground beneath him. He waved his wand a few more times, leaving glowing trails of crimson and golden magic that swept through the room.

“You will never be able to tell anybody what happened in this room tonight,” He said in sick pleasure. “But you will always remember.”



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The sun was blazing brightly in the clear blue sky, casting a wonderful haze of heat over the normally cold and damp island of Azkaban. The island had recently shifted to a new location, which received much nicer weather than the previous one. At the moment, all of the residents of Azkaban were taking the chance to enjoy the sun and Filius and Harry, in a rare lax of security, had warded a small section of the beach, allowing many to have a nice swim for a few hours. But while most of the residents were generally relaxing and idling about, Harry and the five raiding parties were not.

"You're all aware of the plan?" Harry asked quietly, casting an eye over the twenty-five people in front of him. The team leaders, Ron, Flitwick, Shackelbolt, Hestia Jones- who resembled Moody these days with an artificially rapidly-spinning magical blue eye- and Jordan, who was taking up Harry's role as team leader for this particular mission, were gathered around him.

"Yes sir," Jordan said crisply, but winked saucily at Harry when he glanced at her.

Harry ignored her usual flirtatious behaviour and instead glanced at Ron, who was looking deadly serious as he mentally prepared himself.

"We make as much trouble as we can, got it," Ron answered Harry's unspoken question and grimaced. "The more chaos we cause, the more Aurors and Death Eaters that get pulled away from the Ministry."

"Good," Harry said and waved them off. "Go. I'll be entering the Ministry in about half-an-hour, so you have some time. Make sure that people get the opportunity to call for help."

The various team leaders nodded in unison, quickly striding back to their teams and apparating to their designated targets. In less than three seconds, a courtyard full of twenty-four people was empty, leaving Harry alone to contemplate his own next move.

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Diagon Alley was still recovering from the last raid by the Order of Phoenix. With the increasing number of reports in the *Daily Prophet* and the apparently massive wave of new attacks, the atmosphere of normal dull and repressed fear had been replaced with an air of paranoia and apprehension. The wizards and witches of Diagon Alley went about their business in silence. The children, who used to fill the alley with laughter even under Voldemort's reign of the Ministry, stayed close to their parents, literally hugging their legs. Items were bought with carefully and quickly, no pleasantries and greetings were exchanged. The loudest noise was the tinkle of coins rubbing against each other and the dull thud of a particularly large bag of gold was enough to start the surrounding people and make them dive for their wands.

The presence of ten burly and dark-scowled Aurors didn't improve people's attitudes either. The residents and visitors of Diagon Alley seemed just as scared of them as they were of the Order of Phoenix. It didn't help when one of the Aurors, a large scarred blonde veteran of the recent siege of Azkaban, growled menacingly at one of the various children who drifted to close to him. The child scampered away with a squeak of fear and the Auror smiled in black humour.

Hogsmeade, on the other hand, hadn't suffered such a raid in years, most likely due to its close proximity with the fabled wards of Hogwarts. Because of this, wizards and witches laughed and chatted as they walked down the magical town. Children too young for Hogwarts laughed and screamed in playful happiness as they darted around their parents legs. Although it wasn't a Hogwarts weekend, a couple of sixth year Slytherins could be seen slinking into the Hogshead. While there were two Aurors on guard duty in the village, they were sitting down at one of the numerous tables around the Three Broomsticks, playing some form of card game.

The first sign of trouble that happened in both locations was the entrance of the building where the anti-apparition wards had been lifted for public convenience exploded outwards in a deafening roar. For Diagon Alley, it was the brick portal that revealed the alley itself and for Hogsmeade, it was a small red building quite close to Zonko's. From these entrances came five dark robed figures, spreading chaos and destructions with their wands.

In Diagon Alley, the civilians panicked. Wizards ducked into buildings, witches screamed in panic and gathered their children and the Aurors quickly moved to intercept. Quick volleys of various exploding, blasting and full-scale destruction curses rained from the wands of the Order of Phoenix. Windows were shattered in a rain of sparkling glass, food stands were blown away and the very ground was ripped apart, sending shards of stone and sprays of dirt flying through the air. One Auror was blown away by a powerful streak of shimmering orange magic while another simply exploded as he caught the wrong side of a pillar of sparkling white magic.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* One of the Aurors shouted. A deathly green coil of hateful magic burst from the tip of his wand but one of the Order members simply flicked his wand, levitating a huge slab of broken tiles from the ground, which intercepted the killing curse, saving his life.

But after that curse, the Order team retreated backward, still sending off their powerful curses and literally blowing anything that stood in their way apart. The Aurors advanced, looking particularly pleased that they were winning, sending off streaks magic that the elite Order members dodged or blocked with relative ease. Jets of light rained from both sides, striking shields or summoned or levitating physical objects. Finally, the Order members retreated back into the Leaky Cauldron. A few seconds later, there was the distinctive crack of numerous

apparitions and the echoes of a bellowed incantation, before the entire first floor of the Leaky Cauldron, which was used only by the Aurors, exploded in a loud boom, jets of fire roaring from the windows. Wood snapped, was ripped apart or consumed by flames as the building wobbled, its supports destabilising, and fell down in itself with a loud thundering rumble.

At Hogsmeade, the Order members were less destructive but by no means caused less chaos. The two Aurors had been disposed off before they had even had a chance to jump up from the table and now the Order members hurled powerful blasting charms, blowing apart various stands and windows while being quite careful to avoid the various innocent bystanders, who fled amidst screams of terror. At Jonko's, the owner and the store occupants fled the shop as an Order member entered it and no less than a minute later, the entire store was alight with a roaring blaze, dark, thick smoke drifting up in the air. In the Hogshead bar, the patrons and bartender fled as another Order member entered, blasting apart the tables and chairs and bar. A carefully ball of green-blue flames caused the bar and shelves to explode and the building rumbled unsteadily, unused to this sort of punishment. The Order members retreated back to the red building soon after, apparating away as the first of the Aurors apparated in.

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In a large grey room within the Ministry of Magic, a middle-aged woman with an extremely bored expression sat in her chair, her nose poked into the latest edition of Witches Weekly, especially paying attention to the newest bachelors in the Pureblood echelon. Around her, her colleagues and co-workers chatted amongst each other, although occasionally one of the many fireplaces lined in the walls would light up with green flames and a head would appear. When this happened, one of the officials would ask for the department the person wished to contact and put them through. It was the magical switchboard of the Ministry, where usually nothing exciting happened.

That was until one of the fireplaces close to the woman flared. She sighed and put down her magazine, staring at the head that appeared in the fireplace, which had a frantic expression on his face.

"Welcome to the Ministry of Magic, how may I direct your floo?" She said in a monotone voice.

"Department of Magical Law Enforcement- The Order is attacking Diagon Alley!" The man practically yelled, his face pinched up in the fear.

The woman's bored expression cleared up as she waved her wand, sending the floo channel to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Suddenly another fireplace flared up, and another, and another, all shouting different and panicked messages of attacks.

*"...Order attacking Hogsmeade, blasting everything apart..."*

*"...Merlin, the Order is attacking Diagon Alley..."*

*"...safehouse, I repeat, the safehouse in Denver has been compromised..."*

*"...warehouse has been completely destroyed..."*

*"...just apparated into Surrey and started blasting away at one of my mansions..."*

*"...the Aurors here are dead or hurt, we need reinforcements..."*

Within a matter of seconds, the entire centre was on their feet as messages from all over the country flooded into the room, all saying the same message. The Order of Phoenix was attacking and soon dozens of Aurors would be dispatched to these locations. Harry Potter had the diversion he wanted.

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Harry thought that the house was actually quite nice as he broke into it, subverting the standard household wards with ease. The house had been built on the outskirts of York amidst a large industrial sector. If the muggles hadn't been driven away by the repelling wards, they would have wondered in curiosity why there was a small white house with a well kept green garden amongst the dirty smoke-chugging factories, although recent developments in muggle technology had rapidly lowered the pollution rate. As a couple of muggles dressed in dirty overalls walked past, an unseen Harry flicked his wand one last time standing in front of the property within the repelling wards and sending a shower of red sparks that tore through the last flimsy ward. He grabbed the doorknob and faintly smiled as he opened it and walked inside.

Walking past a shiny and Dursley-clean kitchen, he approached the fireplace and grabbed a handful of powder from the mantle. With a subtle wave of his wand, more of a twitch than anything, the fireplace exploded to life with a smattering of flames. Throwing in the floo powder and taking a deep breath, he stepped in the now-green flames and muttered his destination.

"Ministry of Magic- Department of the Control of Magical Creatures!"

Instantly, he was sucked into a whirling vortex of fire, ash and dazzling colours. He closed his eyes, squeezing them shut in order to avoid the dizziness that he usually felt when he used the Floo. It was a mode of transportation that he had never really gotten used to nor used very often, especially once Voldemort had gained control of it. As he zoomed through the floor, he suddenly felt himself come to an abrupt and shocking, though not very painful, stop. He opened his eyes and saw that there were seventeen tiny beacons of light in the distance all

around him just as a feminine and monotonous voice echoed around the void he was in.

*“You must state the proper phrase allocated to your destination or you will be transferred to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement for immediate processing.”*

“Purity,” Harry said clearly.

There was a second of silence as the voice processed the password before Harry suddenly felt himself moving. His body twisted as he was *pushed* towards a particular grate, which zoomed closer and closer, the speck of light turning into a view of a cosy and empty office. Bracing himself, he felt himself get launched from the Floo and the network, coming back to the real world at a stagger as he tried valiantly to regain his balance. He was barely successful as he leant on the desk for support, already analysing his situation. He was in one of the various offices and as he peaked through the window, he saw robed wizards and witches hovering over desks, scrawling on pieces of parchment or reading a report with a slight frown. Turning his vision back to the office, he saw a large and baggy robe as well as a magical cosmetic kit lying on one of the chairs and an appreciative came over his face.

In order for Voldemort to invade and takeover the Ministry of Magic building, he had to tear through the wards with numerous teams of cursebreakers made up of powerful wizards and even some rogue goblins who had been bribed from the neutral stance that Gringotts had took and still took to this day. After the battle and successful coup, Voldemort had the wards and defences upgraded and reconfigured in a completely different manner in order to stop the same thing from happening to him. One of the new wards that he included was a unique ward that acted similarly to the underage detector of magic except that it contained a list of known magical signatures, including Harry's. Magical signatures were a wizards or witches unique connection to magic and easily identifiable as a fingerprint. While Harry and the Order could mask their signature from the long-range detectors of the Ministry, Harry was doubtful of doing the same with these wards so this mission had to be performed with a limited amount of magic, which was why he had brought some extra equipment along with him in order to complete the task, including a dagger made of Basilisk fang, guaranteed to both kill Nagini and destroy the Horcrux inside of her.

After shrugging on the robe over his tight and charmed battle robes, he used the kit and the potions inside to change the colour of his hair to blonde, change the colour of his eyes to blue and change the structure of his face into more pureblood features. While these potions were mainly used by woman to remove sharp chins or angular cheeks that they found attractive, they also had their use in disguise and stealth. After donning his disguise, he took a deep breath and stepped outside the office. He was largely ignored by the wizards and witches

who all had better things to do then stare at a rather plain-looking wizards and this gave him the chance to scout out the department. As his search came up with nothing in the first five minutes, he reached into his robes and pulled out a golden pocket-watch, flipping it and noting that the time was *1:29 pm*. Nagini was due to arrive at any moment. He slipped into an empty desk and rested his head on his arms, closing his eyes and pretending he was weary as he extended his senses.

Sensing and feeling magic was a by-product of being a particularly powerful wizard. Although there was no official name for the talent, all wizards and witches of significant power could sense the magic around them by instinct. In Britain, Harry doubted that there were more than two-dozen people who could do the same thing without using their wand. Although there was a large pulsing web of magic throughout the room, Harry ignored the dark and tingling magic. He was looking for a specific signature, a specific *taste*, if you could call it that. Horcruxes radiated their own dark power, which was both unique and distinctive in feel. Suddenly Harry's eyes snapped open as he felt something at the limit of his senses, a dark and rotting sense of magic that had suddenly emerged. He stood up and briskly walked out of the room and towards the magic.

---

James Anderson was a newly inducted Death Eater and had been raised through the Auror ranks on pure heritage alone. He could quite proudly say that he could trace his lineage back twelve generations of pure-blooded wizards and witches and his family was closely linked with the wealthy families, like the Malfoys, the Avery's and the Notts. But his first assignment as a Death Eater was considered to be demeaning, so he was scowling furiously as he stalked through the Department of Control of Magical Creatures, trailing behind a shimmering dark green and gold snake as it slithered its way to its feeding room.

"Merlin, you look angry," His fellow Death Eater said with a laugh.

"I am a Death Eater and I am a pureblood with twelve generations of history," He spat out angrily. "I don't see why I should be babysitting a bloody snake!"

"That snake is owned by the Dark Lord," The slight man beside him said in amusement. "It deserves an escort."

"I know," Anderson said with a petulant scowl. "I just don't see anybody daring to attack the snake, especially if the Dark Lord owns it. What, is the Order going to infiltrate the Ministry with sole purpose of killing the snake?"

The other Death Eater covered a snort as they passed a group of shaking wizards, who eyed the snake with fear as it slithered into its feeding room, which consisted off a 4 by 4 metres room with a bloody centaur carcass in the centre.

Nagini hissed in pleasure and slithered to the carcass, opening her mouth to reveal very sharp teeth, her mouth lashing out to tear into the flesh.

The two Death Eater's watched with wide eyes as Nagini literally tore into the dirty half-breeds corpse with very un-snake-like motions. Anderson swallowed and glanced at his partner, who was gaping in surprise.

"Er...I didn't know that- that snakes could eat like that," Anderson mumbled weakly.

"I-I don't think that *that* is natural," The other Death Eater murmured weakly.

Suddenly a plain-looking wizard entered the room, his blue eyes widening with surprise at the sight of the snake tearing into the carcass with the vigour of a snarling dog.

"What are you doing here?" Anderson growled, feeling quite glad to have somebody helpless to take his anger out. "This is a restricted area."

The wizard seemed to stutter for a second, his face paling rapidly as Anderson advanced, raising his wand on the unarmed wizard while his partner rolled his eyes in annoyance. Suddenly the wizard moved with a blur, lashing out at Anderson with a wicked-looking blade made of bone. Anderson gurgled in surprise and pain as the dagger slammed into his chest, his eyes dimming with death as the combination Basilisk poison and a sharp blade piercing his chest killed him.

The other Death Eater opened his mouth, preparing to shout in alarm as his wand flew into his hand with a quick, fluid movement, but the blonde wizard was faster and the knife retracted from Anderson's chest and the wizard had flung himself at the Death Eater, slamming the knife into the man's head with brute force.

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Nagini was enjoying her fresh meal, tearing into the bloody carcass of the centaur with considerable enjoyment, her pleasure at her new teeth and jaw from her master increasing with every second. As she revelled in the still-warm flesh and the acrid taste of blood, she suddenly smelt something extremely familiar. A scent she had not smelt for quite some time. The small part of her that her Master was tingling in alarm, aware of what was happening, but she was still a snake and watched with detached interest as her escorts were brutally murdered by a plain-looking wizard with his not-tooth.

"*I know you. You grass-eye*" Nagini hissed as she placed the scent, coiling up as she regarded the human in front of her.



The plain looking wizard glanced at her impassively, gripping his not-tooth tightly. *"Nagini"*

*"You know me still"* Nagini hissed with slight pleasure and felt the searing sensation of her potent poison flooding to her fangs, the dark enchantments her Master had placed on her heightening her deadliness. *"You are here to hunt me"*

"Yes" Harry answered back in parseltongue.

*"I will not let you"* Nagini hissed back menacingly. *"Master will hunt you if you do"*

*"Your Master already hunts me and has never caught me"* Harry responded and raised his blade. Nagini hissed in anger, her crimson eyes glowing with anger and dark magic as she lunged at Harry, her mouth snapping at his leg. At the same time, Harry tried to jump back and thrust his knife into Nagini's thick scaly body at the same time. He felt his knife slice through her, easing past the natural dark enchantments of the Horcrux and destroying it instantly. Nagini let out a powerful dying roar, sounding more like a bear than a snake, but her mouth latched onto Harry's left leg and dug in deep, pumping her potent poison into living flesh as her last act.

Harry let out a cry of pain as he staggered back, lashing out with his right leg and kicking the corpse of Nagini away from him violently. His vision was blurring and his hands were shaking as he felt the poison flow through his body, the minuscule amount enough to kill him. With trembling hands, he reached into his robes and pulled out a small black stone, a bezoar. He placed it on the tip of his tongue and instantly sighed with relief as the burning sensation in his chest dulled, but stiffened with worry as it didn't die completely. Swallowing the first, he pulled out a second bezoar and placed it in his mouth and swallowed it. The burning sensation dulled once again until it was less than a tingle, but the mere fact that the poison hadn't disappeared was enough to frighten him. He needed to leave now so he could get properly healed and the magical detection wards at the Ministry mean that he couldn't even perform the basic healing spells on himself. With a last look at the two dead Death Eaters, he exited the room and shut the door before walking back down the corridor to the office he had entered with a bad limp in his left leg.

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On the other side of the Ministry of Magic, in a grand and decorated room, fourteen well-dressed wizards and witches sat in ornate oak chairs around a thick and luxurious mahogany table covered completely in expensive and rare food. Thirteen of the wizards and witches talked softly with each other around the side of the table, all bearing some form of aristocratic and well-defined features. Beautiful witches dressed in revealing and silky dress-robos while proud wizards sat tall in pride, occasionally glancing at the head of the table with glances of awe or deep respect. Darkness shrouded the head of the table, where a dark cloaked figure



sitting in an ornate and majestic throne-like chair. Gleaming red eyes flickered from beneath a hood stitched with an ornate dark mark and he was dressed in elaborate black and silver robes. A gleaming golden locket hung around this figure's neck and long and spindly, pale hands occasionally toyed with it. In front of the figure lay a plateful of steaming food but the figure had long shed the need for sustenance and one of the many prices of his immense power was his ability to taste and smell. The expensive and succulent meal in front of him had the taste of ash and his emerald-crusted golden goblet was filled with well-aged wine was no more appetizing than the food.

Lord Voldemort attended these lunches for numerous reasons but the food was not one of these reasons. He enjoyed the effect his presence had on the most arrogant and powerful wizards. He enjoyed how they bowed down to his immense power, how they acted cautiously around him as if he could strike out at them at any time. He especially enjoyed the looks of awe and wonder many of the newcomers had when they saw him.

"Ms Avery, how are you enjoying your meal?" He asked silkily. He watched as a flutter of emotion flickered over the woman's face next to him, her blue eyes widening at straightening in a split-second. A gentle touch of Legillimency brushed over the woman's powerful Occlumency shields and the woman, who noticed his soft prod and obediently. Immediately, feelings of deep awe, respect and unquestionable loyalty flooded into Voldemort's mind and his lips twitched. Perhaps she had slightly overdone it but Voldemort acknowledged her lowered Occlumency shields with a slight incline of his head.

"I am enjoying it immensely, milord," She answered with a deep bow of her head.

"Your recent efforts against the Order of Phoenix have not gone unnoticed," Voldemort hissed softly, his voice holding a strange allure over the table as they stopped their talking and eating and straightened to listen to him. "You will be rewarded."

Avery bowed her head once again and Voldemort directed his attention further down the table, where Pansy and Draco Malfoy sat with stiff backs, their posture proud yet subservant to his power.

"And Mrs Malfoy, I do hope that you are enjoying the wine," Voldemort commented quietly, his crimson eyes flaring softly. "I had it especially brought in for your presence at this table."

"You flatter me, milord," Pansy bowed, lowering her eyes to avoid his. "I am honoured that I was invited to dine with such prestige company, milord, especially your own. Let me compliment you on your magnificent robes and that beautiful locket of yours." "

Voldemort let nothing show but there must have been a subtle change in his posture because Pansy's flattering smile was suddenly strained. He smiled thinly, his sharp, pointy teeth gleaming slightly and watched as the Malfoy wife shuddered with unconscious revulsion. "Yes, I'm sure you are enjoying my company immensely. The locket you see used to belong to the noble founder of our very own Hogwarts, Salazar Slytherin. As his heir, I bear the right to wear it," He hissed softly and added. "And I do hope that my physical appearance has not caused you undue discomfort."

Pansy's face, which had been filled with awe at the locket, blanched over but smoothed back to neutrality quickly. Still, the brief flick of horror in her eyes satisfied Voldemort greatly and he gave a tiny exhale of pleasure, letting his eyes flick over to her husband, who watched the proceedings with a carefully structured face.

"Mr Malfoy, your work with the Department of Magical Law Enforcement is much appreciated, especially during this last few weeks. Trust that you will see the fruition of your labour in due time," Voldemort said and watched as Draco bowed his head, showing none of the nervousness that Pansy was, his Occlumency shields tightly wrapped around his emotions.

"I thank you, milord," He muttered gratefully, just as the doors to the room opened and a young Auror trainee entered, bowing quickly as he approached Draco Malfoy and handed him a scroll, studiously avoiding Voldemort's gaze and leaving just as quickly as he came, all the while bowing deeply.

"Is something the matter?" Voldemort asked silkily and dangerously.

"Milord, the Order is attacking Diagon Alley..." Draco started, before the doors opened again and the same Auror trainee entered, this time at a run and with several scrolls bunched in his arms. He dropped them in front of Draco, who immediately flicked his wand and simultaneously unravelled and levitated the scrolls to hover in front of him. "...and Hogsmeade, two of our safehouses and one of our warehouses. We've sent in all available teams to deal with them."

"All targets at once, you say?" Voldemort inquired softly.

"Yes Milord. These initial reports seem to indicate that they're using a vast array of blasting and explosion charms to cause a significant amount of damage, but there's nothing about the Orders intentions."

"It is a diversion," Voldemort interrupted softly. "They are causing chaos and discord in order to separate and divide the Auror forces. Their true target has not been struck yet. And do not look so surprised, young Malfoy; I am well versed in such...tactics."

Voldemort smiled coldly as Malfoy paled under his Lord's gaze and was about to turn to Bellatrix when he felt something painful tug in his chest. He gave a short gasp of pain, clutching a pale hand to the front of his robes as a burning flare of pain swept through his body. Exhaling softly in pain, he ignored his companions as he stood up on shaky legs, his mind wandering to his connection with his most faithful, Nagini, the fifth part of his soul. Unlike the rest of his Horcruxes, he had bonded quite closely with Nagini in order to keep watch over her and her precious cargo. That connection had just been painfully severed and as his mind quickly put together what had happened, combined with the diversions and the removal of most Auror personnel, he growled softly in anger.

"Milord? Master?" Bellatrix asked, her voice laced with the devotion of both a servant and something else, something deeper.

"Nagini," He hissed softly, his eyes flaring up as his magic started to respond to his growing rage. Dark magic flickered over his form, soft, cackling waves exuding his malice and power. Most of his servants drew back; their eyes wide at the power that their normally stoic master usually kept under tight control, but Bellatrix approached him with concern in her eyes, the darkness of her insanity threatening to sweep over her at his command. "She has been killed."

Bellatrix's eyes went wide, surprise and dread flooding over her face. She was one of the privileged few to know of Nagini's true status and role in his life and her mind immediately began to wonder what had just happened. In the split-second it took for realisation to wash over her, Voldemort had already apparated away from the room with a soft crack, his spindly hand clasped tightly around a thirteen-inch yew wand.

He reappeared in Nagini's small feeding room, his crimson eyes analysing the scene before him in an instant. Two Death Eaters lay dead in a pool of their own blood, but Voldemort dismissed their corpses as he focussed on his familiar, his beloved snake, one of the few things that Voldemort held true affection for. Her body lay on the ground in a crumpled heap and wondered briefly how the dark enchantments and rituals that had enhanced her body had been subverted. He strode from the room; his black cloak flapping in the unseen winds produced by his rage, and glanced up and down the corridors, his mind hell-bent on revenge. He flared his nostrils, trying to smell the magic behind the one responsible for this. One of Voldemort's many powers was that he was capable of *smelling* the magical signature of a person and at that moment, he could smell the residual magic of a very familiar aura. He hissed in fury and stalked down the hallway, his nostrils flaring every few seconds.

Voldemort approached the main work offices of the Department of the Control of Magical Creatures, his crimson eyes gleaming with malice and desire. One of his Horcruxes may have been destroyed, but it will have been well worth it if he can destroy Harry Potter! He approached a closed wooden door and as he came

close, slammed his palm on it, using his inhuman and unnatural strength and vigour to blast it off its hinges in a spectacular show of power. He stalked inside, ignoring the various Ministry workers- some who had grabbed wands but quickly lowered them in fear- as his nostrils flared. The wizards and witches in front of him froze and cowered under his deadly gaze, shivering in fright and horror as he stalked through the room, his cloak flapping madly in his whirlwind of magic.

He reached out with his unnatural senses, his vast powers tuning into the room, and sensed movement behind him. Somebody was walking- no, limping, into one of the offices. A brief flare of his nostrils indicated who that person was and less than a second later, Voldemort had whirled around with a grand flourish of his wand.

Although no words were spoken, a streak of blinding green light, radiating icy-cold death and magic so vast that the very hairs on the spectators heads and arms stood up on end, blasted from the tip of his yew wand, accompanied by a loud roaring wind and the smell of rotting and decayed corpses. The streak of intense light zoomed through the air as the wizard threw himself into the office, flying over his head and impacting on the desk visibly from the doorway, which exploded under the force of the spell in a shower of glowing dark sparks and silky bright green flames.

Voldemort quickly and silently apparated to the entrance of the room just in time to see the wizard standing in the fireplace, an elaborate knife clutched in his hands, its tip pointed straight at Voldemort. A destination was already fading from his lips and light blue eyes met their crimson equal for a split microsecond. Voldemort easily penetrated the simple yet effective disguise and his thin lips curled in hatred and anger as he recognised the emerald eyes and dark hair of his most hated enemy. An instant later, Harry Potter was gone, but the knife was not and it rocketed with great speed towards Voldemort. For one brief moment, Voldemort idly thought of moving, but his mind was focussed on the repercussions of yet another destroyed Horcrux and how exactly Harry Potter infiltrated the Ministry that it slammed into his chest, digging into what remained of his natural heart- now a twisted wreck and mockery of a human organ.

Seconds later, a small number of cracks and pops filled the room as the guests from the lunch apparated into the room, their wands out with determined and grim expressions on their faces. Draco and Pansy Malfoy also apparated in, their eyes scanning the room for some clue as to what had just happened, while Bellatrix approached Voldemort with a horrified expression on her face.

"Master...you are injured..." She breathed in horror and concern.

Voldemort smiled thinly at her, his crimson eyes softening for just a brief moment at her concern for his wellbeing as he glanced down at the dagger protruding from his chest. With one deft movement, he fingered the hilt and yanked it

smoothly from his heart. The wound oozed with a thick black liquid that resembled tar more than blood before the pale skin beneath the robes rippled with unholy powers, closing in and knitting back together with ease.

"A basilisk fang remade into a poisoned dagger," He hissed softly to his captivated audience, who trembled before his awesome powers. "It is a most deadly weapon, perhaps one of the most potent weapons in existence." He redirected his gaze at Bellatrix, who, even after serving her master for close to seventy years, looked stunned and in awe. "Fear not Bellatrix, mortal tools and poisons such as these lost their effectiveness long ago. Lord Voldemort does not take injury so easily."

"Master, who would dare try to strike you down in this manner?" Bellatrix breathed as insanity twisted over her features. But a sharp look from Voldemort was enough to quell the inevitable outburst of madness and she bowed her head low under his gaze.

"Harry Potter," Voldemort hissed softly and watched with a morbid curiosity as Bellatrix and Avery both hissed with hatred at the name, while many of the watching wizards and witches hissed with fear at the name. He looked around the room, his crimson eyes searching for guilt, for betrayal, yet found nothing. "He has become most troublesome of late."

"Yes Master," Bellatrix breathed; her violet eyes wide with the ecstasy generated by her master's presence.

Voldemort finally addressed the crowd that had silently watched their boss, their lord and their Master regenerate from a fatal injury in less than a second. "Somebody has failed me," He hissed softly, yet his words seemed to echo around the room. "Harry Potter infiltrated this Department and destroyed a valuable commodity, my precious Nagini. Tell me, how was this allowed to come pass?"

Nobody moved an inch as Voldemort casually strolled from the doorway of the ruined office, his face reflected with the green flames of the burning desk. He stalked past various witches and wizards, all who literally quaked in his powerful presence, before stopping in front of an older woman in her seventies.

"Mrs Nott, you are the Head of this Department, correct?" He asked silkily.

The dark-haired woman nodded shakily, her features twisted in fear and dread and her azure eyes shining with unshed tears as she contemplated her fate.

"Did you allow Harry Potter access to this department?" He hissed softly, his crimson eyes flaring. "And do not lie to me woman- Lord Voldemort has powers beyond your comprehension and knows when he is lied to!"

"N-N...No!" The woman stuttered, her mouth twisting out the word in her fear as she started babbling, tears of fear started to trickle from her eyes. "I-I am loyal, a-always loyal Master, I-I would n-never b-b-betray you!" She sobbed and fell to her knees. Voldemort watched with a sense of enjoyment as the proud pureblood matriarch crawled towards him, placing tentative yet devoted kisses on his robes. After a few seconds, he felt his lips curl and let his eyes flicker over the crowd, who were all avoiding the sight of their boss begging for her life, although Voldemort was certain that anyone of them would do the same.

"Rise, my faithful servant," He hissed softly. "You uttered no lies and Lord Voldemort will reward this honesty with your life. You may keep it."

Nott, rising to her feet, fell back down to her knees and prostrated herself, the sheer relief evident on her features and in her voice. "Thankyou Master, you are merciful, you are too merciful and you honour me with your grace and power!" She uttered in a shaky voice, but Voldemort ignored her and turned back to his dinner companions.

"Come. We have something to discuss," He said silkily. They all bowed in unison and it was then that Voldemort struck. Moving with speeds far faster than what was humanely possible, he darted forward with the air of a striking cobra and grabbed one of the companions, a high-level Death Eater, by the throat with his right hand, easily lifting the wizard off the ground.

"You, however, were tasked to protect Nagini," Voldemort hissed in fury, his pale hand squeezing around the brown-haired man's neck, crushing bones and arteries. Blood trickled from the man's open orifices, his eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth, as he wordlessly begged for his life with his dark eyes. Voldemort kept on squeezing, revelling in how wonderful it felt to personally watch somebody in death throes caused by his own hand. The man's neck suddenly snapped and Voldemort pushed the man away from him, watching his body as it flew through the air at a great speed, striking desks and chairs with audible cracks. The body slammed into the wall and crumpled to the ground in a mess of twisted limbs and Voldemort could sense the fear and horror that suddenly radiated through the room and hissed in pleasure. Only Draco Malfoy, Avery, Bellatrix and one another Death Eater from the lunch remained emotionless, their faces blank behind hard eyes.

"Come Bellatrix," He said quietly. "We may have punished that man for his incompetence, but there is still somebody left to punish for their betrayal."

Bellatrix wordlessly bowed her head as Voldemort disappeared from the room with a soft crack and followed her Master. There was a smattering of cracks and pops as the witches and wizards related to the Death Eaters and Aurors disappeared, leaving four of the lunch guests to gaze at the body in horror, including Pansy Malfoy.

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The trip from the cottage he had broken into to Azkaban was little more than a blur in his mind. The poison had suddenly tripled in intensity from Voldemort's presence and abandoning all protocol, he apparated past the wards, which recognised his magical signature, and into the Azkaban foyer, where he crumpled to the ground and closed his eyes. Voices seemed to shout above him and Harry felt waves of healing magic wash into him, confronting the vile poison in him and dissipating. A second later, he felt the familiar tug at his navel as he was portkeyed to a different location, a location he instantly recognised as the hospital wing by the smell. He opened his eyes as he felt himself levitate, seeing a blonde blur in front of him that quickly morphed into Luna's concerned face, her vapidity disappearing behind her concern.

"Poison...Nagini...two Bezoars didn't work..." He muttered before he closed his eyes again. Distantly, he heard Luna mumbled a powerful diagnostic charm and summon several potion bottles, pressing them to his lips. He felt the cool liquid slide down his throat as the powerful healing potions entered his body, unable to counteract the poison but revitalising and healing the damaged and dead tissue within him. As he slid off into darkness, he could vaguely hear Luna's voice as she talked to somebody.

*"...poison, mixed with powerful dark magic, some kind of rotting curse....yes, like Dumbledore's arm...should be able to counter it, since we've encountered this before.....get a cursebreaker up here, we'll need the...Flitwick should be able to...take an international portkey to Salem...phoenix tears will help... no permanent damage if we work fast..."*

He slipped off into the darkness as relief entered his mind, knowing that he was in good hands.

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### *Azkaban Hospital*

Four days later, Harry sat upright in his hospital bed, waiting a touch impatiently as Luna waved her wand over him. Luna's spell casting was just as quirky and odd as her behaviour, her wand making sharp inverted twists that almost mesmerised Harry as it flew through the air at angles Harry didn't know the human hand was capable of moving at. But despite her odd wand-flicking, she was a brilliant Healer and certainly knew more healing magic than most others on the island, Harry himself included.

"You were very lucky," She said to him dreamily as a flare of golden light spat from her wand, striking Harry on the leg with a warm tingle. "It was powerful dark magic, enough to kill even the most resilient buck-toothed bunyip."

"I assume that I'll live then?" Harry asked dryly and winced as Luna jabbed her wand into his injured left leg, mutter ring another spell that produced a misty blue vapour, which seeped into his very skin. It was icy cold and Harry unconsciously shivered and hissed softly with pain, while Luna summoned a small vial from her shelf.

"With a combination of phoenix-tears, healing charms, advanced cursebreaking spells and the blessing of Ralph, we were able to heal you," Luna said soothingly. "You may have a slight limp for the rest of your life and you will need a cane in your later years, but as of now your leg is as good as new- except for the large rotting patch of skin- we can't remove that."

Harry nodded, sending a small grateful smile to Luna, before furrowing his brows in curiosity. "Luna, who's Ralph?" He asked.

Luna smiled languorously and gestured to her desk, where a striking green rabbit with two conjoined heads sat, nibbling on a small piece of green celery.

"He's very powerful," She breathed, her voice no more than a whisper. "I must thank you for him."

"It wasn't a problem, Luna," Harry said as he got out of bed, wincing as a slight but easily ignorable pain shot through his left leg. He frowned and tested it; placing all of his weight on it and feeling a jolt of minor pain rush through his leg. "I'll need a cane when I'm older?" He asked.

Luna inclined her dirty-blond head, her blue eyes still dreamy. "Oh yes. That curse destroyed much of your muscles and tendons and we were only able to partially heal them. In a few years, you will need a cane to walk properly."



“Great, that’s just great,” Harry muttered and walked, slowly and hesitantly, from the hospital wing. “Thank you for your efforts here, Luna. They are much appreciated.”

Luna didn’t say a word but a true faint smile stretched on her face as she watched him walk from the hospital wing with a slight limp, before she turned back to her desk and started stroking her newest pet. Really, Harry gives her the most interesting things to play with.

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After a fifteen minute walk, where Harry was constantly stopped by well-wishing citizens and concerned guards, Harry made it to his office and let out a huge sigh of relief. With a subtle flick of his wand, a bottle of firewhiskey and a crystal goblet zoomed from one of the shelves and hovered over his desk. The bottle uncorked itself, pouring its shimmering amber contents into the goblet, which then promptly flew into Harry’s hands as the bottle corked itself and zoomed back to its position on the shelf.

Harry took a small sip of his firewhiskey, enjoying the warm sensation that flittered down his throat and burning sensation that started flickering in the bottom of his stomach. Despite his injury, despite the fact that he was inevitable doomed to a limp that would severely hamper his duelling skills in his later life, he had never felt better. Another of Voldemort’s Horcruxes had been destroyed, leaving only one left; the lost locket of Salazar Slytherin taken by the mysterious R.A.B. As he sipped his goblet again, he glanced at his desk and felt the smile on his face drop as he stared at the pile of bound scrolls and loose parchment lying on the desk.

He hesitated, glancing at the paperwork and the door to his office with a pained expression on his face, before he sighed and took a seat, unravelling the first scroll and plucking up his quill, dipping it into the everlasting inkpot.

It was five minutes later, as Harry was furiously scrawling his signature on a piece of parchment, when Ron walked into his office with a stack of parchment in his hands.

“I see that you’re up and at it again,” The redhead man said, partly in amusement and partly in concern.

“You couldn’t keep me away,” Harry deadpanned as he held up the piece of parchment he had been writing on, making a wry face at it.

Ron chuckled gruffly as he dumped his load of parchment on Harry’s desk. “Then I suppose that you’ll enjoy these then.”

Harry made another face and glanced at the nearest piece, glancing over the details. "Promotions?" He queried.

"They just need your signature," Ron explained as Harry took one of the pieces of parchment and scrawled his name at the bottom. He placed it aside as he started tackling the newest stack of work, while Ron hovered above.

"So, you took care of Nagini," Ron stated after a minute of silence.

"That's right," Harry said as he scrawled his name on one of the sheets and placed it aside. "There's only one Horcrux left now."

"I heard about your injury," Ron said, his eyes flicking over Harry's form. "Will it affect your duelling?"

"I should be fine for now, though when I'm older I'll have to get used to duelling with a cane," Harry said with an expression of distaste.

"Hopefully the war won't last that long," Ron mused softly.

"I doubt that it will. Voldemort is the weakest he has ever been in thirty years," Harry said grimly, a brief look of triumph flicking through his eyes. "It's only a matter of time before we find his last Horcrux."

Ron nodded and fell silent, watching his oldest friend pour over the paperwork that Ron himself detested.

"I hear that there have been repercussions regarding our diversion attacks," Harry said after silence had filled the room again.

Ron nodded glumly. "It's been internationally deemed as 'inappropriate, reckless and nothing more than a brute show of force designed to terrorise the citizens of Britain,'" He said.

"That's a nice quote," Harry remarked. "Did you think of it yourself?"

"I got it from the Bunyip Bonanza, the Australian magic rag," Ron said and grimaced. "Their Ministry isn't very pleased, especially since they discreetly supply and fund our efforts."

"Are they thinking of pulling out?" Harry asked sharply, glancing up quickly.

"Not that I've heard, but they've been rather quiet lately anyway," Ron answered, shifting uncomfortably under Harry's dark green gaze as he knew his mind was being carefully scanned through as odd bits of memories flicked through his

consciousness, mostly events of the last few days. "Dammit Harry, I don't like it when you use Legillimency on me like that!"

"Sorry," Harry said, sounding anything but. "I can usually pick up on details in memories that others ignore."

Ron scowled as Harry turned back to his paperwork, making a small noise of surprise as he regarded the next sheet.

"Phillip Trentworthy," Harry read from the top. "Has been accepted into the Defence of Azkaban Island as a guard. Hmm, I suppose that's alright, although I never imagined him as a fighter."

"He just scraped through the necessary duelling courses," Ron explained. "With a bit of confidence, he could do well."

Harry nodded and dismissed the former-spy's application, turning to the next with a sigh of resignation as Ron said his goodbyes and left the room.

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### *The Ministry of Magic*

It was a well known fact to the magical population of Britain that underneath Muggle London lay the Ministry of Magic. However, what lay underneath the Ministry of Magic was a fairly well kept secret to all but a few of Voldemort's most loyal followers and was the subject of a gruelling three year initiative once the first phrase of Operation Evanescence had been started seven years ago. Today, however, thousands of Aurors- conscripted or not, now glimpsed the fruition of their Dark Lord's plans. Because underneath the Ministry, an enormous cavern had been dug out and in this cavern, on the dry dirt and rocks, sat dozens of large, wooden ships, each ship filled to the brim with the magical fighting forces of Britain. Around each ship was a gigantic pillar made of obsidian, the end-result of year's worth of enchantments and spells, some done by Lord Voldemort himself. Even to the untrained eye, the dry-docked fleet could easily be interpreted as an invasion fleet. Britain was about to go to war and most Aurors understood this the very moment they laid eyes on their ships. In one corner of the cavern, several dozen brawly Trolls stood still, their minds crushed under the will of their captors. Whoever was on the receiving end of this army was in a lot of trouble.

In the centre of all of this, a large podium stood. On this podium, Lord Voldemort sat on his throne-like chair shrouded in darkness, tapping his spindly fingers along the side of his wand repeatedly as he watched with delight as another ship was filled to the brim with Aurors and Death Eaters. He exhaled in pleasure, his crimson eyes flaring with excitement, eagerness and anticipation. Behind him

stood a congregation of two-dozen different wizards and witches, most watching the spectacle in front of them with a sense of stunned awe and surprise.

"Now you see, Malfoy, the fruition of my plans, just as promised," Lord Voldemort hissed softly, his eyes never leaving the army in front of him, *his* army.

"Milord, I am in awe of your power and the power that you wield here," Draco Malfoy said, his voice still unsteady with the shock of the mere sight of the forces in front of him.

Voldemort smiled chillingly as the final preparations for the voyage were made and watched as the dominated Trolls were herded into smaller and wider drop-off craft, their masters striking at them with long, thin whips. Above him, a squad of Flyers zoomed past as they headed down for one of the ships, landing down on one of the ships and becoming no more than small figures in the background.

"Draco dear, how are the ships going to move if there's no water?" Pansy Malfoy asked in a low voice, her eyes wide as she regarded the army in front of her.

"The Dark Lord obviously has a plan, Pansy, so keep your ignorant mouth shut!" Malfoy hissed in a soft voice, discernable only to Voldemort and his superior hearing.

"This is magnificent, Master," Bellatrix breathed softly, coming to stand by her Lord's throne. "When you first told me of your plans, Master, I will shamefully admit that I doubted you in the smallest back of my mind. Now that I have seen this, I will never doubt again Master, ever."

Voldemort allowed his thin lips to curve slightly and raised his pale hand, stroking the side of Bellatrix's cheek fondly, like he would a pet dog. Bellatrix shuddered at the touch, a shudder of pleasure, not pain, and her eyes drooped as her gaze went smoky. Voldemort smiled again at her predictable reactions yet stroked her cheek again before he rose from his throne. Bellatrix straightened and bowed, falling back behind him as he took a step forward.

Almost instantly, a hush fell over the thousands of people below him as Voldemort allowed his crimson gaze to wash over his servants below him. Behind him, the top-level Aurors and Death Eaters as well as a few guests, such as Severus Snape and Linden Avery, straightened as Voldemort began to speak, his soft hissing voice spreading easily throughout the crowded cavern.

"Today, you are here to become the instruments of my power," He started, his reptilian eyes flaring with pleasure. "For twenty-five years, there has only been one group has continually defy me. This group, made up of mudbloods, blood traitors and fools, has divided Britain, striking out without hesitation at my forces,

my people, *you*. This group, I sense, has caused numerous people to doubt my power, some who stand in front of me at this very moment.”

He watched with amusement and a tinge of anger as a ripple of reflexive and nervous twitches ran through the thousands before him and let his dark, chaotic magic flare up around him, drawing in the shadows from around him in an intimidating show of theatrics.

“Some of you have doubted my power. Some of you doubted my loyal servants. Some of you doubted *me*. Today, I will put these irrational doubts to ease. In a matter of mere hours, we will strike back at the cause of these doubts, and all of the Britain and the world will see that Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix are no match for Lord Voldemort’s powers!”

Voldemort watched as another ripple ran through the crowd, a ripple of shock, and let his power flare again, striking out with darkness, dimming the thousands of floating lanterns and letting dark shadows fall over the enthralled crowd in front of him.

“Tonight, we will strike at the heart of Azkaban, where at this very moment; my loyal spy is dismantling the wards! Tonight, we will show Harry Potter and the world our true power!” Voldemort spoke loudly and strongly, his crimson eyes flaring brightly in the darkness. The very rock around Voldemort began to tremble and dust fell through the rocky ceiling as Voldemort allowed his emotions to flow through him, his anger, rage and superiority, turning his strong voice into a roar. “Tonight, we shall destroy the Order of Phoenix and their futile resistance against us! Tonight, we shall level Azkaban to the ground! Tonight, *Harry Potter dies!*”

Voldemort stepped back, his eyes gleaming with dark pleasures as the crowd before him roared with excitement and support, some raising their wands and letting a multitude of sparks of all different colours fly into the air. Voldemort stepped back, gazing at his army with an intense look of superiority and pride-pride at his own power and genius. He returned to his throne, enveloping himself in darkness again and turned his head past Avery to Bellatrix, who was watching him with the most intense look of devotion on her face. He felt another smile come over his pale face and let it. Tonight, the Order would fall and tomorrow, the world was his to take.

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Some time later, a cloaked figure slipped out the massive cavern and back into the Ministry of Magic the very first moment they could, making sure to avoid people. Several times, the figure had to duck into an empty crevice as a chattering pair of wizards would walk past, but after seven minutes of stealthily moving towards the Ministry Owlery, the cloaked figure managed to make it there and strode in, an open scroll and a piece of black string in their hands. However,

they stopped dead in their tracks as they met with the unexpected sight of Draco Malfoy fastening a letter to a proud eagle owl.

Both people stopped; the cloaked figure in surprise and Malfoy in guilt. Malfoy seemed to pale, but drew himself in.

“This isn’t what it looks like...” He started, before he stopped as the figure lifted their head, revealing their face. Surprise flooded his features. “You? What are you doing here, you stupid woman! The Dark Lord...”

The cloaked figure raised her wand and Malfoy’s eyes flickered to the scroll in her hand and back to her face. His face paled as realisation sunk in.

“You...you’re the spy!” He breathed.

“Goodbye Draco,” The cloaked figure said softly.

“But...you’re...” Malfoy stuttered as a coil of sickly-green magic struck him in the chest. A look of absolute horror spread over his features as his eyes went glassy, his warm body sprawling backwards onto the ground. The cloaked figure ignored him completely and silently shut the door with a wave of her wand and scribbled a rushed sentence on her scroll before rolling it up, before clasp it on Malfoy’s eagle owl, placing it under a variation of the Imperius Curse.

As the bird shot off into the night sky, the cloaked figure turned back to the body of Draco Malfoy and flicked her wand in an intricate series of movements. The body shimmered and quickly morphed into a small bone, which the spy summoned into her hand and placed it in her robes. A second later, she snapped the wand she was holding into three different pieces. The wand, which had been charmed with a unique magical signature that masked her own, was now useless, especially once the investigation started and Malfoy’s magical signature, along with this one, was found in the room. Silently, the spy left as quickly as she had came, returning back to the massive cavern. After all, she had to keep up appearances, didn’t she?

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The sun had already set over Azkaban when Harry finally finished the four-day build-up of paperwork, sighing audibly with relief as he placed down his quill and massaged his slightly sore hand. He plucked small piece of gravy-covered meat with a fork from the tray next to him and placed it in his mouth, enjoying the last morsel of his dinner.

“Christina?” Harry called loudly, standing up and ignoring the soft tingle of pain that ran through his leg.

Christina poked her curly-haired face inside the room. “Yes?” She called from the doorway.

“Could you take these to...” Harry started, gesturing to the stacks of scrolls of parchment next to his desk when somebody stumbled roughly past Christina, knocking her aside in their haste as they literally sprinted up to Harry, panting madly. It was one of the trainee guards, holding a scroll tied by a very familiar piece of silky black string that Harry took with a sinking feeling in his stomach. On the rolled-up scroll, there was familiar writing scrawled hastily.

***URGENT! POTTER, OPEN IMMEDIATELY!***

Harry muttered a phrase in Trollish and immediately unravelled the scroll. His spy hadn’t even bothered to use the code language, instead there was a hastily scrawled message that Harry read with growing dread and horror.

*Dark Lord has gathered an army of thousand*

*Plans to attack Azkaban tonight*

*Spy in Azkaban bringing down wards*

In smaller writing, underneath the main message.

*Malfoy compromised my cover and has been eliminated.*

“Fuck!” Harry hissed softly, his mind whirring with possibilities and potential scenarios, just as there was bright flash outside his window. He strode across the room and shoved his head outside, watching with horror as a brilliant dome of faint green-blue of magic appeared, shattering and ripping apart with a loud tinkling clash. A second dome, made up of reddish-golden hues, also shimmered into existence and started disintegrating before his very eyes, the primary and secondary wards falling apart, the powerful magical focuses that held them into place failing. Immediately, he apparated from his office, leaving two confused and scared people behind.

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*A few minutes beforehand*

In a rarely used section of Azkaban, far away from the muggleborn students and normal Azkaban citizens, three tough-looking brown-robed guards stood in front of a heavily warded door. One of the guards, a dark-brown-haired man, suddenly stiffened as a dirty-robed and thin man hesitantly stepped into the corridor, his face buried beneath a piece of parchment.

"Hey you!" The guard hollered and unison, three wands were levelled at the newcomer, who looked up with a startled look on his face and squeaked, dropping his parchment in his haste to raise his hands. "What are you doing here?"

"I-I-I...t-that is, t-the m-m-map w-was d-d-damaged and I-I got I-lost on my p-patrol a-and I don't k-know where I a-am..." The thin man started babbling quickly, his fright clearly evident as the three guards approached him, their faces grim and serious.

One of the guards summoned the piece of parchment to his hands and glanced down at it. It was a badly smudged map of Azkaban and its patrol routes, the ones usually given to the new trainee guards, and he felt himself unconsciously relax.

"Your first patrol?" He asked gruffly, his voice a touch softer than it had been before.

The thin man rapidly nodded, his wide blue eyes radiating innocence, and the man sighed.

"This is a restricted section," One of the other guards said as the three of them slightly lowered their wands. "You can't come here."

"I-I don't know w-where I am," The thin man mumbled, ducking his head as his cheeks flushed with shame. "I d-dropped my drink on the m-map and I w-was running late for t-the patrol. I d-didn't know that this was r-restricted, I s-swear!"

"Hey man, relax," The guard tried to say soothingly. "Just turn back, go left on the next corridor and take the stairs up three floors."

The thin man nodded and turned away, starting to stumble back down the hall, before his posture changed from stuttering nervousness to supreme arrogance in a blink and he ducked, spinning around with his wand outstretched. The three guards had immediately raised their own at the man's very first movement and struck out with powerful, lethal curses, which soared over the man's head as he retaliated.

A blasting curse shimmering with suppressed power blasted through a hastily constricted bronze dome, striking one guard in the chest and killing him instantly. As the dead guard dropped to the ground, the attacker sidestepped to his right and drew back, reminiscent to a slithering serpent, sending a glimmering silver arc of roaring power through the second guards head, blocking two powerful curses that came his way with surprising ease, deflecting them back at the remaining guard with a quick bat of his wand. The guard, who had to duck his own curse, moved right into the attacker's next spell, a barrage of sharp icy



shards that tore through his body. He dropped to the ground, gurgling as blood filled his lungs, and the last thing he saw was a tell-tale green flash.

The man quickly strode to the door, stepping over the three bodies without a second thought, and reached into his robes, pulling out a small black box. He opened the box and gazed at the enchanted dagger, which had been charmed by the Dark Lord himself to break and destroy lower-level wards. The true purpose of the recent siege, the true reason why the Ministry lost over one-hundred Aurors, the true reason why the east tower of Azkaban was targeted so specifically, was to allow one of these daggers, which had been carried by the Flyers, into Azkaban, into the hands of the Dark Lord's greatest spy.

With a deep breath, the man placed the tip of his dagger on the door lock and slammed it in with all of his might. Instantly, the door became a whirlwind of swirling colours. Powerful protection spells, no doubt cast by the traitor, Potter, were shattered in a spectacular display of flashing colours, glowing hues of blue and green sliding away from the door, leaving it unwarded. He grasped the doorknob and slowly opened the door and entered, closing it behind him.

The room inside pulsed with a beautiful blue-green light, illuminating the man's features for a second. There was an odd silence on the room, as if it were totally separated from the rest of the world. This silence was only disturbed by an odd humming noise, which originated from the centre of the room, where a large crystalline spiral jutted from the floor, one glowing in a magnificent soft blue-green light. A smaller spiral glowed in a reddish-golden hue behind it, its glow absorbed by the pulsing light of the first and scattered around on the walls and roofs were several dozen smaller crystals, all pulsing with a white light. The man felt his breath hitch at the sight before him. He knew that the large spiral crystals were the focus points of the first two sets of wards and kept them stable and operational and that the smaller crystals were the individual unique wards, like the anti-apparition wards and the anti-portkey wards.

He shook himself out of his stupor and quickly approached the first spiral of blue-green crystal, watching it languidly pulse away. He raised his dagger above his head and with all of his might; he slammed it down into the crystal. Immediately there was a high-pitch whining noise as the crystal shuddered, magic cackling over it furiously. But the enchanted blade glowed in a deep violet light, forming dome around the dagger and neutralising the fierce magical backlash with ease. The crystal made a loud splintering noise as cracks started to form in it before it shattered in on itself, large crystal chunks falling from the spiral and shattering to the ground.

The man quickly withdrew his dagger as he saw the blue-green pulse in the crystal dim into nothingness and a second later, he slammed the dagger into the other spiral crystal, just as it started glowing in a reddish-golden hue as the emergency layer of wards activated. This crystal crumbled away like the first and

shattered as purple magic streamed into it, destroying the protective qualities of the crystal and neutralising the wards.

His face was twisted in a look of intense glee as he backed away from the crumbling and diminishing spiral crystals, his eyes roving the walls for the anti-apparition crystal, when he heard a soft crack from outside the door. He immediately lunged forward and threw himself behind the cracked spiral crystals as the door was blown off its hinges in a roar of powerful magic and Harry Potter stalked in, his face white with anger and his eyes shining with power. He grinned to himself manically and popped his head over the crystal, revealing his face to Potter, who blinked in surprise.

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“Phillip Trentworthy!” Harry whispered softly in surprise and betrayal as he identified the maniacal face behind the two ruined focus-crystals.

“That’s right Potter,” Phillip hissed, the small man radiating a sense of arrogance and power that Harry had never noticed before, something that he would have never expected to the former spy. “I was never your spy! I am and always have been a loyal Death Eater!”

“We rescued you...” Harry muttered softly, his emerald eyes piercing into Phillips and slamming into his mind with the power, force and subtlety of a speeding train. To his immense surprise, his Legillimency probe was batted aside by powerful Occlumency shields and he withdrew; his face suddenly wary.

Phillip grinned in dark pleasure. “I am fully versed in Occlumency; I would have to be in order to fool you. I have been heavily trained in all of the mind arts and subjugated to several spells that allowed me to avoid the veritserum. Don’t look so surprised Potter, did you honestly think that the Dark Lord was without recourses? For two years, I acted like a good little spy, passing on any information I saw fit in order to serve your Order. Then I was ‘captured’ and like the Dark Lord predicted, you came gallivanting to my rescue. The attack on Azkaban a few weeks back- that was staged just to allow me the tools to destroy the wards! And now, the Dark Lord is coming with his entire army! He will crush you and your pathetic mudblood Order and...”

But Harry had had enough of his gloating after receiving the information he had wanted and with powerful thrust of his wand, sent a spiral of glowing dark crimson magic towards the ruined spiral crystals where Phillip was hiding behind. The crystals were blown apart by the sheer power of the spell and although Phillip conjured a silver and green corporeal shield, ducking his head and gripping it firmly, the spell snapped the shield in two, blasting Phillip backwards and sending him sprawling to the ground.

The traitor recovered extremely quickly and rolled to his side, springing to his feet as a cone of shimmering ebony magic zapped the ground where he had been laying less than a second ago. With a roar of anger, Phillip slashed his wand, sending a jet of purple flames at Harry, whose face was grim as he flicked his wand; slicing into the flames and watching them fade away. He conjured his own corporeal shield, a murky grey object that trembled as it intercepted a series of six powerful and lethal dark curses, which tinged the air with oily black slithers of dark magic.

Phillip was unrelenting, sending blast after blast of dark magic at Harry, but in the first few seconds of the duel, he knew he was outclassed. But he had entered this mission knowing that he may very well die for the Dark Lord's cause, so he straightened his back and sent a glowing green streak of magic at Harry, who swished his wand and summoned a large chunk of crystal towards him, which exploded as it took the brunt of the curse. His next curse was batted aside with fury as Potter stepped closer and closer and when Phillip was unexpectedly pushed away by a discrete banishing charm hidden behind an easily-deflectable orb of sparkling yellow light, he stumbled back, his eyes surprised at the tactic.

Harry didn't say another word, but his eyes glittered furiously as he cast his final spell on Phillip, sending a small ball of shimmering red and yellow fire at Phillip with an underarm jab of his wand. Phillip winced as the spell struck him in the chest but he didn't feel anything except a warm tingle as the ball of flames was sucked into his skin. He stared mystified at his chest before he felt something burning inside of him. He opened his mouth to scream and felt a wave of pain as the flames inside of him were fuelled by the oxygen he had inhaled.

Harry watched dispassionately as Phillip screamed in agony, his flesh starting to blacken as he was consumed by fire from the inside. A yellow and red glow sparkled in his ears and nose, sending blinding beams of light through the dark room as the traitor fell to his knees, his eyes horrified and pleading for a quick death. Harry watched for the twelve seconds it took for somebody to die this way, his green eyes staring unblinkingly as the man in front of him literally transformed into ash and charcoal, the burnt and smoky corpse thumping to the ground motionless. He turned away and apparated from the room without a second thought.

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Within the cavern deep below the Ministry, Voldemort waited patiently in his throne-chair, his spindly fingers running over the arms of his chair. Behind him, he could hear the restless rustle of the robes of his most elite, although Draco Malfoy had disappeared sometime ago and had never returned. Voldemort felt a cold smile stretch his thin lips. He was most likely sending the information of this attack to his employers in France. Oh yes, Voldemort knew how Malfoy sold information to the French, but it was a tendency that had saved Voldemort some

considerable time as he used his pathetic pawn to feed the French Ministry with misinformation, paving the way for his inevitable invasion.

Suddenly he felt a searing heat on his chest, his flesh singing as a new connection was suddenly activated. Although Potter had learnt Occlumency and ended any potential use of the link that resided between them, Voldemort had been intrigued by the concept of such a radically peculiar connection and had experimented on it. In the end, he had planted one on his mole within the Order that would activate once the wards had been shut down. When it suddenly went cold after ten or so seconds, Voldemort knew that his spy had been discovered and killed.

He stood up from his throne and watched as the Aurors below him suddenly fell silent. A cold smile washed over his face and his crimson eyes gleamed as he opened his mouth, revealing his sharp, pointed teeth.

“Now is the time to strike,” Voldemort said loudly as he began to flick his wand in an intricate pattern. A blue glow glistened into existence on the tip of his wand and at exactly the same time, the pillars standing upright next to each dry-docked ship glowed in unison with the same pale blue colour. Voldemort swished his wand and concentrated on his destination and the pillars gathered the magic that had been poured into them for over a year and encompassed each boat with blinding blue light, sucking them all in. There was a bright azure flash and Voldemort’s vision doubled as he and his army was thrown into another location with great force.

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Within the dense fog that surrounded Azkaban, no more than a kilometre from the shore, a large wooden ship suddenly appeared with a bluish flash of light two metres above the surface of the water. It instantly dropped down as blue flash faded, slamming into the water with a large splash, rocking madly and heaving its occupants left and right. Suddenly dozens of blue flashes lit up in the distance as more and more boats appeared, dropping down into the water with splashes of their own. At the same time, a mass of broomstick riders suddenly appeared above the boats as their individual portkeys transported them to the location.

Voldemort now stood on the deck of a large boat; his crimson eyes unable to penetrate the fog that pulsed around their ships. Behind him, he could feel magic flaring up as a team of Cursebreakers started to dispel the fog around them. A similar thing was happening on every ship and Voldemort watched as the fog started to clear and his eyes found the fortress of Azkaban on the tiny, muddy island in front of him. A cold smile curled on his lips and he raised his wand, sending a shower of green sparks. Dozens of Flyers suddenly rocketed past on their broomsticks, zooming towards the island, while the boats suddenly surged forward towards the shore. In the distance, Voldemort could see the faint figures

of six large dragons, flapping furiously towards their destination and he turned to Bellatrix, who watched him with an eager look on her pale face.

“Activate our Anti-Apparition Wards and our Anti-Portkey wards,” He hissed softly and menacingly. “Nobody leaves this island alive!”

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Harry reappeared in the war room, where constant barrages of silver lights were flowing into the room. The receivers of the messenger spells were shouting out panicked reports, their faces pale and shocked as they relayed the situation to Ron, who was looking grimmer and grimmer as the reports were shouted out.

*“The fog is lifting...”*

*“The west tower reports two dozen ships on their side...”*

*“Another dozen coming from the south...”*

*“...Flyers! Coming in from all directions...”*

*“The wards have failed! Both layers are down...”*

*“Fuck! There are dragons coming...”*

*“The ships have surrounded us!”*

Ron suddenly noticed Harry and almost sighed with relief, before he took in Harry’s dark face and sagged as his worst fears were confirmed.

“What happened?” He asked amidst the chaos as wizards and witches bustled around him.

“We were betrayed,” Harry responded shortly. “It was Phillip. The wards are permanently down”

Ron sucked in an indrawn breath, his eyes widening with shock as Harry turned to the chaotic room and lifted his wand. A loud roaring crack suddenly blared through the room, silencing the panicked Order members and redirecting their gaze to their leader.

“Our wards have been sabotaged and the Ministry is attacking,” Harry said quickly and bluntly, ignoring the falling faces of disbelief and incredulity. “The guards are to prepare for an attack and must be ready to fall back when the Order is given. All civilians are to report to the evacuation room. We are retreating from Azkaban.”

There was stunned silence as people took in the news that the fortress that had stood for a quarter of a century was about to fall, before a volley of glowing silver message spells were blasted from the room as people passed on his orders.

Harry gave a curt nod to Ron and tried to apparate from the room but something cold clamped down on him and he staggered back, holding a hand to his head.

“They’ve raised anti-apparition wards,” Harry growled angrily. “Sound the alarms and prepare for battle!”

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All throughout Azkaban, a wailing alarm started to sound. Had a muggle been listening, they would have commented that the sirens sounded remarkably like the old air-raid alarm from the World War II movies. Guards sprinted through the halls to their posts, their expressions grim but determined as the silvery message spells relayed their Orders. The children and civilians followed the evacuation procedures and moved quickly to the designated Portkey rooms. However, when they tried to use them, they found that they weren’t working and true panic and fear began to blossom within Azkaban.

As Harry received the news that the Portkeys were being blocked, the first Ministry boats surged onto the shore and hordes of blue robed Aurors poured out of them, their wands held high as they began their attack while wizards and witches on broomstick riders zoomed past. Volleys of brightly coloured lights erupted from the battlements of Azkaban while a company of fully-trained war trolls stomped from their boats with their powerful enchanted shields and club.

The second siege of Azkaban had begun.

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Dozens of large, wooden ships were propelled from the rough, ocean water and onto the dirty and sandy beach. Huge ramps were magically launched from the ship and thousands of wizards and witches sprinting from the boats, their wands clasped tightly in their hands. Death Eaters and Aurors moved into formation as an immense volley of jets, streaks and beams of various coloured magics burst from the battlements of Azkaban, six or seven curses zooming towards a particular Auror squadron that numbered five dozen. The first rank of Aurors simultaneously conjured domes of sparkling defensive magic during the precious seconds it took for the curses to travel towards them, and although most of the volley struck the shields, which shimmered as it took the brunt of the volley with ease, a few of the more powerful curses, including two sickly-green jets of dark magic and an extremely well-cast incineration charm, broke through three different shields. The Aurors who had cast the shields dodged the killing curses, ducking underneath the deadly green light, but the Aurors behind them were not so lucky and two of them fell, looks of horror and surprise washing over their faces as their eyes glazed over in death. The fiery incineration curse, however, shattered through a particularly weak dome of silver magic and enveloped the Auror in a flash of bright light and a searing wave of heat, which struck three Aurors close to the burning wizard and blew them aside. However, the Auror squadron ignored their fallen comrades as they advanced, treading over or occasionally on the bodies as they advanced with grim faces. The other curses were also blocked by the advancing Auror squadrons, suffering only a few casualties through the higher-level curses, which tore through the less powerful shields with bloody results, or through the occasional streak of green light that slammed into an Auror and ending their life instantly.

However, the Order members in the battlements apparently realised that the Auror numbers were too great for this type of spell-work and that the casualties they were inflicting, while numbering in the dozens after four volleys, were not going to make a difference in the long-run with one and a half-thousand Aurors advancing towards them and shifted their aim to more strategic targets, the war trolls.

These trolls, who had been bewitched into blindly following the Dark Lord, wore thick five-inch thick metal armour and large helmets which covered most of their face. Their clubs were a mixture between thick, strong wooden logs, for smashing down walls and thin spike-covered rails, for swiping at flyers. They all carried large shields, almost as big as the Troll itself, and each shield was enchanted and enhanced using powerful runes. The Trolls, at least ninety of them, were clumped together in groups of three, which allowed them to defend each others weak points, and spread through the Auror forces that had just surrounded Azkaban. When the fifth volley burst from the tower in a spectacular barrage of colours and flashes that lit up the darkened sky, the Trolls grunted in unison and raised their large shields. The spells and curses that had been sent by guards with outstanding aim struck against the enchanted metals, causing

little to no damage as the shields flickered with a silver haze, absorbing and deflecting the harmful magic. Most of the spells, however, were off course and exploded on the ground near the Trolls, sometimes striking an unexpected Auror squadron. One squadron found themselves thrown off their feet as the very ground beneath them exploded in a rupturing fissure as a sparkling cone of brightly lit dirty-yellow magic missed one of the Troll squadrons and struck the ground close to them. Several of them died instantly and others toppled to the ground with a missing limb. For one group of Trolls, they found themselves under bombardment by some guards with truly excellent aim, their shields glowing in a bright silver light as they absorbed a series of powerful blasting curses, the vibrations of the impact so powerful that even with their strength, they staggered and stumbled. A well-aimed jet of *Avada Kedavra* was lucky enough to catch one of the Trolls during this stumble as it let its shield drop slightly and it fell to the muddy ground with a thump. With a weakness in their defences, the other two trolls were quickly slaughtered by a powerful barrage of explosion curses, which tore into their weak side and through their armour, sending them lumbering towards the ground.

In the skies above the dirty and muddy grounds, dozens of Aurors on broomstick zoomed towards Azkaban, some carrying spiked beater bats and small glowing orbs and others carrying their wands. As they zoomed past their ground counterparts and towards the massive fort in front of them, thirty or so Order members on broomsticks rose from the battlements, firing off low-level curses in a barrage of flashy colours. The Aurors swerved, ducked and tried to dodge the curses and while most of them were easily able to evade the spell-fire, one Auror, who had been gazing at the fort with awe and hence had been distracted, received one of the lower-level curses, a body-bind, in the chest. Instantly, he stiffened on his broom and despite the fact that the jinx was a basic schoolyard toy; he slipped off his broom and fell to his doom towards the hard ground. The Auror Flyers zoomed towards the Order Flyers, who met with head-on as both sides let loose with various streaks of light. Some Flyers conjured globes of shimmering bronze, silver and golden magic to envelop them and protect them from the various jinxes and curses sizzling through the air while others relied on their skill with a broom to swerve out of the way. At the start, it had seemed only the quick-to-cast curses, the basics, had been used, but now the Aurors gave ground as they retreated, pursued by the Order members, surprised by the fury of their enemies. But it was not to last long and after the fifth Auror body fell to the ground, one of the Order members moved to slow and was slammed in the face with a spiked-beater bat, killed instantly as the Auror zoomed past. Another Order member took a curse straight in the chest, a thin silver curve slicing into him. The Order member, his face filled with surprise, lost control of his broom and veered to his left, slamming into one of his companions and sending them both tumbling out of control. Soon, it was apparent that the superior numbers of the Auror Flyers far out-weighed the skill the Order Flyers possessed and they zoomed back to Azkaban with the Aurors shouting insults and curses after them. As the Order members zoomed over the battlements, they suddenly veered off



and spun around, turning to face the Auror Flyers chasing them. It was at this moment that the four massive towers at each corner of the fort came to life. Two rapidly-paced barrage of shining golden bursts of energy burst from each tower, flittering towards the Aurors. Several of them screamed in agony as they were struck by a repeated hail of shiny golden bursts, their brooms and robes exploding into roaring flames and lighting up the night sky as well as fireworks would have. The Aurors, distracted, were swept aside as the Order Flyers advanced, their wands flicking jets of light as they charged.

It was at this moment that four roaring and blinding pillars of magic shot from the towers and into the sky, forming into a brightly glowing ball that seem to suspend over the island for a second or so, before they rocketed down onto the congregated mass of Aurors approaching the walls. Wands were raised and shield charms were bellowed and hundreds of shields of all different colours, flickering bronze, shimmering silver, shining gold and pale blue burst into existence all around the advancing army, meshing together to form one large curved down that sparkled in a multitude of muddled colours, glowing brightly in the night. Four pillars of roaring magic, radiating with raw power, rocketed down onto each of these congregated shields. Dozens of Aurors found themselves blown off their feets as the shields glowed, struggling desperately to deflect the cackling energy that had thrown itself at them, and succeeding. However, another four brilliant pillars of magic shot from the towers and lanced down at them, and another and another. Slowly, the large glowing shields, fuelled by over a hundred Aurors per shield began to crack under the strain, the Aurors holding them up gritting their teeth as their wands shook and grew warm, while other Aurors rushed forward past the shields, knowing that they would soon fail under the pressure. They were right as the next pillars of roaring magic shattered the two of the congregated shields and struck the Aurors below them. There was a massive rumble in the ground and fissures appeared at the location of the blasts as the ground exploded in a shower of flying dirt, rock and flames. Dozens of Aurors died, their bodies torn apart by either the explosive magic or shredded into bloody bits by the debris. One blast lanced towards a group of Trolls, who were either too slow or too dim-witted to raise their enchanted shields and disappeared in a blazing detonation. In a few minutes, the Aurors had taken close to seventy casualties as they struggled to shield themselves from the powerful Order weapons. But even as the towers continued their bombardment, the Aurors had reached the large, thick stone walls of Azkaban and now had a much better chance of cursing the Order members firing streaks of light from the battlements. The two large and spiked gate towers on either side of the massive black gate suddenly erupted with a hail of magic, streaks of light zooming downwards towards the Aurors, who shielded themselves or threw themselves to the ground and responded with their own torrent of magic, streaks of light bursting from both sides with great speed as the Aurors and Order fought for control of the gate.

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Lord Voldemort watched the battle occurring before him with gleaming eyes, pleasure twisted on his serpentine face. Ignoring the Aurors dieing around him, he strode forward through the battlefield, watching his own men and women die around him with enjoyment. Behind him, two dozen Death Eaters trailed after him silently; although some had conjured themselves corporeal shields and others were watching the battlements wearily. As Voldemort calmly strode his way to the looming black gates of Azkaban, his nose-slits flared as he inhaled the magical scent of magic, like a young boy would inhale the scent of his grandmother's freshly baked pie, and almost shuddered in orgasmic pleasure. The sheer level of magic that was being generated, the pain and agony that individuals from both sides were feeling, the intoxicating scent of a person's magic just after they had been killed, still fresh yet fading in a unique and invisible flare, it was bliss for Lord Voldemort and his crimson eyes were shining with true happiness and pleasure. *This* was what he lived for, this was what he sought.

"Master, watch out!" One of the Death Eaters behind him suddenly yelled.

Voldemort mentally scoffed at the fool, well aware of the sparkling blue curse that was rocketing towards him and with a deft flick of his yew wand, he batted the spell away with considerable ease. His eyes gleamed as he held his wand out in front of him and he noticed as several Aurors, who had crowded close to him for protection, slunk away, rather facing their possible death at the hands of a well-cast spell than anger their Master, whose face had suddenly gone very dangerous.

Voldemort continued on his path, deflecting any spell from the battlements that approached him and on one occasion, twisting his body to the side and letting a green flash of light zoom past him, ignoring the startled cry of one of his prized Death Eaters as they were caught off guard by the curse and fell to the ground in a crumpled heap. Finally, he approached a small group of Aurors standing a short distance away from the gate. A circle of six Trolls and their powerful shields stood around the group, defending them with their lives, while Aurors outside the circle battled the Order member in the towers, hurling flashes of light and balls of fire towards the spiked-structure.

"Milord," One of the Aurors inside the circle, a wearied, grizzled man in his apparent seventies uttered, bowing low. "Our forces are advancing, but we are having problems with the attacks coming from the towers!"

"Patience, Auror," Voldemort hissed softly. "And faith. Trust that Lord Voldemort knows what he is doing."

The grizzled man swallowed nervously. "Of course, Milord," He said quickly, flinching as another bolt of magic burst from the towers and onto his men, looking

vaguely nauseated as he heard the screams of agony of people he had worked with and trained. "I was not implying otherwise."

Voldemort ignored him as he and his Death Eaters joined the circle, watching the battle with a more critical eye and blocking out the excitement and pleasure he was feeling. The Auror had been right, even without the main wards, there were still enough protection spells in the stones of Azkaban to deflect and block most of the Aurors retaliatory attack. His eyes suddenly narrowed as he observed one of the towers fire another pillar of blinding light into the sky, which suddenly rocketed down towards the group! He lifted his wand even as the Trolls registered the burst and let loose three blasts of shimmering silver power, magic radiating from the blinding beam and causing the hair of his nearby Death Eaters to stand up on end. The pillar of roaring magic collided straight on with Voldemort's burst and exploded in a bright flash of shimmering power, lighting up the battlefield around him.

He turned back to the circle, enjoying the blank looks that carefully hid the fear and awe that Voldemort could sense them feeling and smiled thinly.

"Remove the gates," He ordered coldly, his eyes flaring with power. "Now."

Voldemort stood back and watched as his two-dozen of his most elite servants, his famed Death Eaters, levelled their wands at the door. Some of them muttered incantations while many of them just flicked their wands silently, but the end result was twenty-four variations of powerful explosion and blasting curses, sizzling bolts of magic that rocketed towards the black gates and struck it with enough force and power to level a small building. The gate, however, merely shimmered in a dark rippling wave of magic, absorbing the curses and neutralising their destructive power by turning them into a shower of silver sparks.

"Very impressive, Harry," Voldemort hissed softly to himself. "Very impressive, indeed."

Suddenly there was a huge shout of exclamation and relief from the surrounding Auror forces as they turned their heads to the skies. Despite himself, Voldemort tilted his head upwards and felt a pleased smile curve around his lips as he saw six large dragons fly above his head. A jet of searing yellow flames burst from one of the dragons as it swooped past, the fireball sizzling through the air and striking into the wall. The stone was ripped apart in a fiery explosion, shards of debris flying through the air by the sheer force of the fireball. Another dragon aimed a jet of flames at one of the towers but to Voldemort's surprise and displeasure, it was at that moment when a shimmering green-blue war enveloped the tower, flickering madly and fluctuating wildly without any sense of order.

"It seems that the wards are not as weak as I had hoped," Voldemort said coldly to his Death Eaters, eyeing the random shimmering of the blue-green hues

around the tower. "But that does not matter. Azkaban will fall tonight; it will only be a matter of time. Death Eaters- continued your attack on the gate!"

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Deep inside Azkaban in the secure War Room, Harry watched as entire flocks of shimmering silver message spells floated into the room, striking various peoples in the forehead, the people then passing along the message in a flurry of yells. The room was full of shouts and hollers as analysts scribbled down furious notes with their quills, their fast minds trying desperately to create tactics that would be successful against such a horde. Ron watched all of this with a grim face, his eyes drawn to a pensieve memory that had just been extracted from a message spell, the memory hovering in the basin of a gigantic pensieve, where the entire army of the Ministry could be seen.

"The wards are still active, but there acting....strangely," One of the analysts shouted, finishing off with a lame expression on his face.

"The focus crystals were broken, not the wards themselves," Harry explained grimly. "But there's nothing to keep the magic in place anymore, so most of the wards are fading away. There's going to be large gaps in our defences."

Ron nodded gloomily, his face bleak. "It's come down to this, then," He said.

"They're attacking the gate!" One of analysts shouted as a shimmering wave of magic entered him. "It's holding!"

"The wards on the gate are entirely independent of the wards around Azkaban," Harry told Ron quietly. "But they won't last long. Hell, I don't think that we would have won against an army this size with our wards at full strength."

"Probably didn't want to decimate his army," Ron agreed softly as the two wizards watched the bustle around them.

"Merlin! They have dragons- six dragons are attacking Azkaban!" Somebody suddenly yelled and there was a flurry of movement as tacticians looked up in alarm and then back down again at their half-formulated strategies, desperately trying to fit in a counter to dragons.

"The gate is still under attack and the wards are slowly failing!"

"The Hippogriff riders have left the stables, but there outmatched and outnumbered!"

"We just lost four people on the north-eastern battlements!"

Harry watched as the news got progressively worse and worse, his face darkening. Just as he was thinking about leaving to head off the defences on the battlements, Hermione rushed into the room, her face red with exertion and her eyes panicked.

"The portkeys aren't working!" She burst out loudly.

"What?" Ron asked and horror flashed over his face. "What about the students and the..."

"They're all still here!" Hermione interrupted breathlessly, her eyes glued on Harry's. "I was thinking that we should use the portal. After all, it's why we chose Australia as the backup site."

Harry blinked. "I assume that you can get it running again?" He asked.

Hermione nodded as Ron furrowed his brows, looking curious.

"Portal? We have a portal?" He asked sceptically.

Hermione nodded briskly. "Australia was colonised over two-hundred and fifty years ago by muggle and magical prisoners. In order to transport the wizards and witches from Azkaban, because international portkeys hadn't been invented yet, they created a fixed portal at the bottom of Azkaban and at New Azkaban in Australia. New Azkaban was shut down in 1901, when Australia became a nation," She rattled off quickly. "Both portals were shut down. When we were looking for places to evacuate if Azkaban ever fell, we chose New Azkaban because it was in ruins, abandoned by the Australian Ministry, and there was a portal there that nobody, not even Voldemort, would expect it."

"We'll move the evacuees down to the portal room," Harry commanded quickly. "Send Flitwick and Shackelbolt's team for protection. Ron and I will..."

He was cut off as the very floors and walls of Azkaban shook ominously as a deep shudder ran through the fort. Dust fluttered from the ceiling as Harry switched his gaze to a bright silvery message spell, which struck a blonde witch in the head.

"The gates have fallen!" She whispered with a horrified face. "The Ministry has breached the gates!"

"Alright everybody, listen up!" Harry said loudly and firmly, cutting off any chance the people in the room had to panic. "We're evacuating Azkaban right now. Shrink and take all of the pensieves with us and destroy all of the documents. Send a message spell to the battlements and tell the guard to retreat back to the fort, taking positions around the second floor and covering all stairways. Send up

the sparks and get the Flyers and Riders back down- we'll take the hippogriffs with us as well. Tell the towers to leave the Earth Staffs but take the Air Staffs and get down to the entrance hall. Hermione, you organise what you need to open that portal. Ron, you and I will take command of the defences in the entrance hall. Everybody, move!"

The room jumped into action as analysts jumped to their feet, ignoring the message spells that were flying towards them and instead flicking their wands and sending out Harry's instructions. Some of them began to summon scraps of parchment and important scrolls, while others had conjured a powerful green blaze of flames and had started a small heatless bonfire in the middle of the room that incinerated any piece of parchment that went into it without leaving even so much as ash. Hermione disappeared from the room as a bald wizard with large spectacles levitated the pensieves and started shrinking them, while a greying witch swished her wand, shrinking down entire bookcases and placing them into her pocket. Harry and Ron exchanged grim looks and exited the room, only to bump into Christina, who was levitating a large trunk and looked relieved to see Harry. As he opened his mouth to give her orders, she cut him off quickly.

"I've got all of your books and personal items and I've destroyed all of your scrolls, including the reports from your spy," She said rapidly. "I've started a fire in your room to remove any hair and nail-clippings and warded your door but the portkey isn't working!"

"Take the trunk down to the Portal and wait for Hermione to activate it," Harry told her quickly, already moving away from her. "And look out for yourself!"

Christina watched Harry's back as he and Ron sprinted down a corridor, turning right into another hallway at the end. Worry flooded through her but she did as she was told and started walking quickly in the other direction as the first of the analysts fled the War Room.

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At the fallen gates of Azkaban, Lord Voldemort watched with amusement as the rapid spell-fire from the battlements and towers suddenly stopped and noticing that all of the Order Flyers and the Hippogriff Riders, which had been furiously attacking the large dragons, who were surprisingly agile and had avoided most of the various jets of light sent their way including the commonly used *Avada Kedavra*, suddenly fled back down into Azkaban, fleeing before the awesome might and numbers of Lord Voldemort. The dragons screeched in triumph as their prey ran, throwing jets of searing flames after them before circling back and continuing to bombard the walls and towers of Azkaban with a scorching inferno.

"It appears that the Order of Phoenix is valiantly retreating," He said with cold amusement and smiled maliciously as his Death Eaters roared with laughter, his crimson eyes turning back to the twisted and smoking piles of metal that had

once been the gates. Even with his superior vision, he was unable to pierce the thick shrouds of fog that lay beyond the gates and briefly wondered if he should do something about enhancing his vision before he made a simple motion with his right hand, his left twirling his wand in an absent-mindedly motion.

A group of seven Aurors gulped as they received their orders, glancing at the foreboding fog before glancing back at their Master. They made the decision quickly and with their wands raised, they slowly entered the fog underneath Voldemort's watchful eye. There was utter silence for a complete minute, save for the occasional flame-throwing of the dragons, as Voldemort waited for any sign of the expected resistance. Next to him, a Death Eater shuffled impatiently, his eyes irritable behind the white mask but a sharp look from Voldemort made the Death Eater freeze and straighten up, sending a deep bow in his direction.

Suddenly from within the fog came a loud piercing scream of pain and fright. The hundreds of Aurors that had made their way to the gate since the Order retreated shivered and flinched, some swallowing nervously and others losing whatever colour they had in their cheeks as the scream echoed in the night, replacing the morbid silence that had settled in once their resistance had fled. The scream was suddenly cut off abruptly, ending in an odd gurgling noise and once again silence descended upon the army of the Ministry.

Everybody watched the mysterious fog in silence, even Voldemort, who was mentally running through a list of powerful spells that could possibly destroy this enchantment when something stirred the fog, sending rolls of thick, white mist towards the rapidly growing crowd. Voldemort raised his wand, intent on dispelling the mist, when something jumped out from it and onto the nearest Auror, who screamed in agony as the thing ripped the flesh of his face with its teeth. Voldemort watched with fascination as the Inferius bared its rotting and black teeth, its dead eyes seeking out its next target before a jet of yellow flames blasted it apart. One of his Death Eaters stalked forward, his wand flaring at the tip as he extinguished the Inferius, dispelling the flames from the charred corpse.

"Harry Potter has dabbled far deeper into the dark arts than even I suspected," Voldemort whispered softly, but his voice was easily heard by his Death Eaters. Suddenly another wave of mist drifted out of the gates and an entire horde of rotting animated Inferi burst from the foggy depths, their blackened and decomposing hands- several missing fingers, outstretched towards the Aurors. However, the faces on these Inferi, unlike their bodies, seemed to have been specifically preserved and Voldemort felt a tinge of admiration at his nemesis as even he looked astonished at the identities of the bodies in front of him.

Rodolphus and Rabastan Lestranger, their dead faces grinning madly, launched themselves at a pack of Aurors, who found themselves rooted to the spot as the war heroes that they had studied at Hogwarts lunged for them. Daphne Greengrass almost looked seductive, her beautiful face shining with an odd glow,

her blonde hair whipping back and her beautiful lips stretched into a smile. The Auror she lunged at almost blushed at her beauty until he noticed the decaying body that went with the head and the putrid smell that accompanied her. Theodore Nott appeared from the mist, missing a hand and half of his chest, accompanied by Avery, whose skin had been permanently stained with blood, his eye dangling from his socket.

Voldemort heard an intake of breath and knew that Linden Avery, a recent favourite of his, had spotted her reanimated father. He watched as the Inferi tore into his surprised Aurors, taking the advantage of surprise and ripping them apart with sprays of blood. The night was suddenly on fire as dozens of streaks of yellow, orange and red fire blasted from the tips of Aurors wands as they tried to incinerate the Inferi among their ranks. Rodolphous Lestrange fell to the ground, his entire body ablaze as the dark enchantments succumbed to their one weakness, fire. Rabastan Lestrange also went down, his decaying body withering as it was burnt alive, his mouth open in a silent scream. Theodore Nott was the victim of a powerful severing charm by one of the Death Eaters, Severus Snape, who used his unique *Sectumsempra* to slice the Inferius in half. Daphne Greengrass was subjugated to both a powerful incineration charm, which vaporised the right half of her rotting body in a wave of searing heat, and a high-powered detonation curse, which blew her apart in a mess of rotting limbs. However, when an Auror tried to destroy Avery, he found himself blasted off his feet and into the ground as Linden Avery stepped forward, removing her mask to stare her father's inferius in the eyes. Voldemort lifted a hand; stalling the actions of his Death Eaters as they rest of the Aurors finished dealing with the remaining Inferi, a swarm of unrecognisable and unknown corpses, regarding the scene in front of him with morbid curiosity. Linden didn't seem to have the strength to destroy her father as his leering face came closer and closer as he shuffled forward, his one rotting arm outstretched, his fingers curved, as if he intended to pluck the heart of his daughter out of her chest. But Linden, her face emotionless and her eyes cold and flat, merely raised her wand. No incantation was uttered but Voldemort could feel the anger and rage that went into that spell. The devastation curse, a high-level piece of dark magic, blasted from her wand in the form of a powerful flash of light and Avery was torn asunder by the powerful magic, his rotting corpse disappearing under the potent purple blast, leaving little more than a few scattered pieces of flesh and a splatter of old blood on the ground. The rest of the Inferi were dealt with in the next few minutes, leaving a large group of shell-shocked Aurors and wary Death Eaters facing the misty passage, which had started dissipating after the last inferius had been destroyed. Soon, a dirty paved pathway surrounded by a chilling graveyard was revealed, leading to a small set of iron doors. Arched windows had been built above the small path and Voldemort noted very slight movement in them.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" He hissed menacingly, brandishing his wand with a forceful flick. An immense streak of sickly-green blasted from his wand and down the



pathway, striking the set of iron doors. A faint shield of shimmering bronze coloured magic tried to stop the unstoppable killing curse and failed, and the door was suddenly blasted off its hinges, revealing the entrance of a lighted room. Immediately, brown-robed figures scuttled away from the doorway and a solid brick wall was conjured in front of the entrance with such skill that Voldemort knew exactly who was waiting for him behind those doors. He gestured to the Aurors with his thin, pale hands, his red eyes gleaming at the prospect of an upcoming bloodbath with a hint of sadistic longing.

“Aurors,” He commanded. “That is your destination! In there lies the true enemy, no longer able to hide behind their powerful wards! In there, you will find glory and fame as the vanquishers of the Order of Phoenix! In there, you will be able to strike at the enemies of the Wizarding World! Aurors- advance and attack!”

With a roar of challenge, four squads of Aurors, eighty men and women, charged past the ruined gates and onto the small, dirty pathway. As Voldemort had presumed, a bombardment of curses erupted from the windows above the pathway, slicing into the charging Aurors. Some were blasted off their feet, others killed in violent and imaginative ways as streaks of light slammed into them. One of the Aurors was transfigured into a charging bull, knocking aside her companions in panic with her sharp horns, before she was stunned by a fellow Auror.

This was the cue for Voldemort and he gave a curt order, watching as another four squads of Aurors charged past the gates, running forward with their wands aimed above them in order to assist their companions who had been halted in their tracks. Spells sizzled through the air, some striking the walls near the arched windows and scorching the stone, sometimes causing a small chunk to be blasted off the wall in a shower of ground rock and tiny stone shards, while others zoomed into the windows, but the Order members ducked behind the thick stone walls rather than risk a shielding charm. The second group of Aurors reached the crippled first, valiantly shooting off curses in a vain attempt to wrestle away from the chokepoint they had found themselves in.

Voldemort made another gesture and with a dark smile, stalked forward, his black robes billowing in an invisible wind as he entered the stone pathway, his Death Eaters and another squadron of Aurors following him in. The lust for battle started singing in his veins as he stalked forward, raising his wand at the nearest arch on his left. With a deafening roar, a thundering crimson beam shot from his wand and onto the wall next to the arch. The wall violently exploded, large chunk of stone bursting from the structure and falling to the ground under the force of the spell. Voldemort flicked his wand at two large chunks of singed stone that were falling to the ground and with a deft swish, propelled them at the arch opposite the ruined wall. The large pieces of rock slammed into the wall and broke through the stone, striking three Order members Voldemort had seen through the corner of his eye with great force, most likely killing them instantly.

He was sporting a very uncharacteristic grin of enjoyment as he continued stalking forward, hearing his Death Eaters cast their own powerful spells at the arches. Some of the dark curses came in the form of powerful fireballs, which shot through the arch and exploded in a blazing explosion of flickering purple and ebony.

Voldemort revelled in the screams of agony he heard as Order members were burnt alive, consumed by the purple and black flames that ate through their robes and skin. He raised his wand again and with an odd twist and a subtle flick, produced a thin whip-like slither of glowing cerise magic, brandishing his wand and sending it soaring through the air. It struck a wall next to one of the arches and splattered on as if it were made of a thick, gooey substance. A second later the paste-like substance suddenly flared in a bright light, eating away at the stone and creating a long, slender rift in the stone. With a sadistic grin, Voldemort flicked his wand, imparting a sudden and great blow on the wall below the rift, which gave a groan of protest as it crumbled at the bottom and slowly wobbled, tilting inwards and falling towards the ground. There was a sickening crunch that even the Aurors could hear as they bombarded the other arches with renewed vigour and morale, confident in their Lord's awesome power.

Suddenly, the Order members stopped casting their spells and the narrow pathway, which had been a violent battlefield a matter of second beforehand, suddenly drifted into silence that was punctuated by the groans and whimpers of the Aurors who had fallen under the onslaught and had not been killed. With a pleased look of satisfaction on his face, Voldemort turned his crimson eyes to the brick wall that had blocked the entrance to Azkaban and walked towards it, stepping over the dead and injured without a second look and sidestepping onto the dirty unkempt grass, careful not to stand directly in front of it. With a jab of his wand a muttered incantation, for Lord Voldemort had never been a master of transfiguration, the wall grew darker and darker as the bricks were transfigured into a thick sheet of metal. Voldemort jabbed his wand again, his crimson eyes intent, and the spiral of dark colour was sucked away from the metal sheet, growing and expanding, twisting and turning until it morphed into an exact replica of the first, jutting out of the doorway. He did the several times before standing back and observing his work with a critical eye. The duplicates stood firm, one thick sheet of metal in front of the other, and Voldemort deemed it adequate for his plan.

"Raise the mark," He ordered coldly and swung around. "Aurors; line up behind these metal sheets and prepare to charge inside."

The blue-robed wizards and witches, several with bloody patches on their clothes and faces, did as they were instructed without hesitation, while a masked Death Eater raised his wand.

*"Morsmordre!"* He bellowed with power and from his wand shot a smoky green and grey substance that morphed into an elaborate leering skull, with a silver and green snake protruding from its mouth.

Voldemort glanced to the skies and saw the Flyers zoom down to the abandoned towers, jumping off their brooms and unsheathing their wands before stomping down the stairways. He also took note of Bellatrix and the other half of his Death Eaters entering one of the towers and turned back to the blocked doorway, smiling coldly.

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Harry waited in the warm entrance hall with bated breath, his piercing green eyes serious and grim as he waited for Voldemort's advance. The rumbles that had run through Azkaban had stopped and Harry didn't need the message spell to tell him that the Azkaban Guards had fallen back from the arches above the narrow pathway. He had watched with calculating eyes as the brick wall he had quickly conjured had been transfigured into a sheet of dark iron, wondering what exactly Voldemort was up to. Next to him, his Raiding Party waited with narrow eyes as they all took shelter beneath one of the gigantic pillars in the room. On the second floor above them, Azkaban guards levelled their wands at the door from their balconies. On three of the balconies, Harry could see the surviving members of the Tower Guard holding their slim, blue Air Staves, ready to channel their magic into the enchanted weapons. Others, like Harry, took shelter behind the thick stone columns and opposite Harry's pillar, Ron and his raiding team stood and waited for the inevitable, steely looking men and women ready to fight. A dozen gleaming brass statues, twice the size of a normal man and armed with two sharp swords behind their back, had been positioned around the entrance hall, ready for animation. They were all armoured and each held two swords behind their backs. In total, perhaps sixty members of Azkaban waited in silence for the Ministry to break into the entrance hall, trying desperately to buy time for the rest of Azkaban to destroy any sensitive materials, remove all possible polyjuice sources, such as hair, and evacuate to the Portal, which Harry guessed that Hermione was furiously trying to open, knowing that she needed at least fifteen more minutes.

"We're in deep shit," Jordan whispered to him, her green eyes alight with anticipation but her face bleak.

"We'll get through this," Bowden muttered gruffly, the old witch's knuckles white as she clutched her wand.

Harry opened his mouth to reply when the thick sheet of metal blocking the door suddenly shot forward, followed by a dozen more. Guards cried out incantations as nearly sixty streaks, beams and jets of various-coloured light shot towards the plates, which had zoomed madly towards different balconies before flying down towards the pillars. The thirteen sheets of thick iron were blown apart by the

sheer force of the spells, but the second it had taken to do that saw dozens of blue-robed Aurors charge into the entrance hall, their wands sending streaks of magic at anything they saw. Another volley of curses erupted from the Azkaban Guards, taking down most of the first rank of Aurors, nearly thirty men and women, as they flooded into the room.

Harry ducked his head back as a curse cracked onto the massive stone pillar and gathered his magic, sharpening his mind with Occlumency and taking a deep breath, before he swivelled out of the shadow of the pillar, his wand glowing as a glittering orb of yellow magic burst from the tip, rocketing towards the Aurors and exploding in a flare of powerful golden light. A dozen of the tightly-packed Aurors were blown off their feet as Harry advanced; his face tight with suppressed anger as he flicked his wand. Four Aurors sending a barrage of curses at a balcony suddenly gave startled yells of surprise as something yanked them by the feet and tossed them through the air towards a wall. They crunched into painfully and fell down into crumpled heaps as three Aurors, seeing the new threat striding towards them, bellowed incantations in unison. Three streaks of identical sparkling scarlet magic rocketed towards him but with a simple bat of his wand, Harry deflected the curses straight back at the Aurors with far greater speed and power. The curses, now glowing brightly, struck the Aurors, snapping their shields charms in half and blasting them away. Harry then levelled his wand to his left and without uttering a word, yanked an Auror off his feet. The Auror gave a startled yell of surprise, dropping his wand as he was spun through the air. He slammed into the backs of two other Aurors, sending them all toppling to the ground as Harry forcibly flicked his wand a number of times, sending glowing pulses of white light that slammed into four Aurors, sending them toppling to the ground. The fifth pulse was clumsily deflected by a glimmering globe of bronze magic and the Auror responded with a snarled killing curse. An instant later his head exploded and a nearby Auror, who had just sent a searing ball of flames towards one of the balconies, was dragged by his ankle in Harry's direction, flipping madly through the air and intercepting the deadly streak of green light for Harry.

Suddenly, a rapid burst of golden pulses burst from three balconies as the Air Staffs were activated, mowing through the congregated mass of Aurors with ease. Aurors fell, their flames catching alight and the horrible smell of burnt flesh drifted through the entrance hall, overpowering the scent of sweat, blood and the faint smell of burnt ozone that occurs when powerful magic is used. Harry continued breaking into the enemy Aurors, destroying ranks and disrupting formations with a single flick of his wand and trying to push them back out of the entrance hall. He was vaguely aware that several other people had darted from the pillars, including Ron and his very own team, but focussed on the enemy at hand. After a minute of intense fighting, Harry roughly estimated that there were at least one-hundred dead or incapacitated Aurors piling up on in the hall, but two of the balconies had been obliterated and two dozen of his own Order members lay dead or wounded, bleeding from their wounds.

It was at that moment that another rush of Aurors entered the room and this time, accompanied by a dozen war trolls, who jumped furiously over the Aurors and into the fray. Harry ended one troll's life with a quick flash of green light, sending the eternally-surprised troll tumbling to the ground, and two other trolls fell under the onslaught of spell fire, smoking holes in their chest and head where they had been too slow to raise their shields. But the trolls rushed forward, swinging their spiked clubs in rage. Two wizards of the Azkaban Guard were knocked with great force; another was crushed as a troll slammed the club down on it. One of the trolls had its shield raised as it blocked a rapid-pulse of golden light from one of the staffs from the balcony. It moved closer and closer, deflecting the harmful bolts of magic, before, in a vicious underarmed swipe, slammed its club through the floor of the balcony, which was torn apart by the club, collapsing in a shower of rocks and dust. Two witches fell through the hole, screaming in fright, and were promptly squashed, while the wizards with the Air Staff had been killed by the spiked club, his body torn into a mangled heap and thrown through the room.

The brass statues, which had been dormant, suddenly sprang to life and stood up from their crouching position. They withdrew their swords and advanced forward, their faces blank. Some Aurors fired curses at them but most bounced off without any effect. A well-placed killing curse blasted the head off one of the statues with a flash of green light but the statue remained undeterred as they swiped with their large swords, which were the size of an average man. Aurors were sliced apart as the statues settled into a furious pace with their swords, pushing the Auror ranks back. Several statues rushed forward to meet the trolls in battle, their swords clanging on enchanted shields as the trolls, moving faster than their bulk belied, blocked the blows with the shields, striking forward with their clubs when they had the chance. One troll moved too slow and saw two swords carve into his neck, taking off his head with a brass blur of the sword. One of the statues, however, failed to avoid a swipe from one of the trolls and metal splintered in a horrible screech as it was easily torn apart by the powerful blow.

Even with the enchanted statues made of brass and the higher ground the Order possessed, Harry found himself falling back as more and more Aurors surged in to replace the dozens of casualties they had lost. The Aurors were gaining ground not by skill but by pure numbers and for every Auror that was killed or incapacitated, another three took their place. As one of the brass statues leapt for the doorway, its swords raised, it suddenly froze as powerful magic gripped it firmly. Metal screeched with protest as Lord Voldemort entered the room, his crimson eyes gleaming with pleasure at the scent of death and battle, his wand held by his fingertips as the statue was quickly crushed by powerful, invisible forces, its arms and legs caving in before it was thrown carelessly across the room, the hunk of metal no longer humanoid. Behind Voldemort, two dozen dark-cloaked and white-masked Death Eaters stalked into the room, entering the ranks of the average Aurors and throwing their powerful skill and experience into battle. Voldemort strode forward, his Aurors unconsciously moving aside as they

fought, his crimson eyes never leaving the piercing emerald eyes of Harry Potter, who, with a face chiselled from stone, strode forward, his Order members moving out of his way. The two powerful wizards walked briskly towards each other, both noticing how the battling wizards and witches had given berth to them, and stopped ten metres apart. Voldemort eyed Harry with an expression of cold delight tinged with raw hatred, his crimson eyes flaring with rage at the sight of his nemesis.

“Welcome to Azkaban,” Harry said coldly and settled into a duelling stance, his holly wand levelled straight for the Dark Lord. Voldemort hissed in wordless anger, moving into a serpentine stance, the tip of his wand pressed gently against his own forehead as the two powerful wizards prepared to duel.

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*"Avada Kedavra!"* Voldemort hissed menacingly, being the first to strike out as his wand flicked forcefully towards Harry. Harry didn't move an inch as his wand glowed in a dark purple light, before he swished it harshly towards Voldemort. As a streak of powerful and deadly green light rushed towards Harry amidst the noise of a roaring wind, four glowing and pulsing purple orbs, cackling with powerful dark magic, homed in on Voldemort, who took a step backwards and muttered something short under his breath, tapping himself idly with his wand.

Simultaneously, the pulsing orbs struck Voldemort and the Dark Lord disappeared underneath an inferno of searing, unnatural purple and ebony flames, while one of the nearby animated brass statues jumped in front of Harry, taking the lethal streak of green light in the arm, which was ripped apart by the sheer power of the spell. The statue, not seeming to notice the disability he now sported, jumped away as Voldemort emerged from the blazing inferno unharmed, a translucent pale blue glow glittering over his black robes and pale skin, his crimson eyes flaring with anger and enjoyment.

Without a word, Voldemort jabbed his wand towards Harry, who mimicked Voldemort's movements with the wand an instant later. In unison, two deafening blood-red streaks of magic erupted from the tips of their wands with a bright flash of light, rocketing towards each other. The streaks of magic met and exploded in a thundering and frenzied clash of power, the very air cackling with wild magic as the crimson light faded away. Harry felt a flicker of surprise wash over his face as Voldemort smiled cruelly.

"You did not think that I would let you utilise the *Priori Incantatem* effect to your advantage yet again?" He mocked coldly and Harry realised that the wand he held was not the 13-inch yew wand that he had been accustomed to. He was jerked from his thoughts as Voldemort jabbed his wand again, sending off another streak of blood-red magic and Harry neatly sidestepped, raising his wand as he made a small, deft flick. The tip of his wand suddenly lit up in a fiery glow as Voldemort's curse rocketed past, slamming into one of the large stone pillars behind Harry and slicing through it easily.

The pillar groaned but otherwise remained standing as Harry brandished his wand like a whip an instant later, a thin but blazing coil of fire lashing out at Voldemort, who twisted his wrist and raised his wand to meet the strike. Although no conjured dome of magic appeared around the Dark Lord, Harry's fiery whip was deflected aside by a powerful force. Again, Harry lashed out; cracking the blazing fire on the ground near Voldemort, his eyes cold as he watched the very stone melt under the underlying thermal energy of his spell, but Voldemort easily deflected that with a thin smile.

As Harry lashed out for a third time, Voldemort softly muttered an incantation and his hand darted out and curled around the long coil of blazing fire. The yellow and red flames seemed to have no effect on the pale flesh but the instant Voldemort touched it, the fire blazed with a sickly and oily black that spread down the coil of fire in an instant. Harry quickly broke off the spell before the slick black magic could reach the tip of his wand and Voldemort yanked the remains of the coil of fire, now blazing with dark black flames into his hands. Harry let loose with a roaring jet of dark-blue light that crumbled away the small rocks on the ground by the sheer power emanating from the curse and Voldemort hurled the oily black flames at it. The coil wrapped itself around the streak of blue, which shimmered disturbingly before exploding in a violet ball of magic, blue and silver sparks intermingling with flecks of oily magic as the entrance hall trembled beneath the explosion.

Harry waved his wand again, his mind concentrating on the specific details of what he hoped to achieve as he absently sidestepped another powerful streak of green-light, ignoring the scent of death and decay that drifted into his nostrils. A long shiny silver spear with a wicked barbed head was suddenly conjured, the various molecules in the air drawn together and transfigured into the deadly weapon. The spear was launched at Voldemort with great force by a powerful banishing charm as Harry quickly conjured a set of thin daggers, banishing each of them towards the Dark Lord as he was done.

Voldemort gripped his wand tightly and held it upright, his eyes glittering heatedly. The air in front of him rippled strangely, small pockets of air suddenly roaring furiously with wind. The spear dove through these ripples and wobbled madly, its speed losing momentum and direction as it suddenly veered towards the ground, the tip of the weapon snapping as it hit hard rock. Similarly, the daggers were deflected in much the same manner as the spear was, veering off into the ground, and the air stopped rippling as Voldemort retaliated in kind, a single glowing yellow dart bursting from his wand towards Harry.

Harry took a step backwards as his mind raced through his options, never encountering the spell before. After a split-second, he chose to conjure a ball of dull grey metal and hurled it at the dart with great speed. The dart slammed into it and there was a tearing screech of metal as it drove through the solid metal, cracking the ball apart into several pieces and zooming through it untouched. Harry's eyes widened threw himself to his left as the dart zoomed past and jumped to his feet, side-stepping in the nick of time as a streak of *Avada Kedavra* exploded into a burst of green flames on the ground where Harry had just been standing.

Harry responded in kind, his face grim and his eyes dangerous as he sent his own deadly *Avada Kedavra* towards Voldemort, who gracefully sidestepped, his crimson eyes flaring in both anger and pleasure as the duel seemed to escalate



in danger for him. He regarded Harry with a dark smile on his face, his pale fingers idly tapping the side of his wand.

"Oh, if only Albus Dumbledore could see his protégé now," He hissed menacingly. "How disappointed would he be to see his favourite pupil use such deadly and hateful magic?"

"You're right, Voldemort," Harry responded coldly, his own dark smile washing over his face. "He'd be disappointed that all I'm trying to do is kill you. He believed that you deserved something worse than death, you know."

"He was a fool," Voldemort scoffed as Harry and Voldemort circled around each other warily, paying little attention to the fierce fighting occurring around them as they were given a wide berth.

"He was a fool," Harry agreed and Voldemort blinked, clearly not expecting an agreement. "He honestly believed that pieces of scum like Snape and Malfoy deserved a second chance. But at least he was a well-meaning fool. That's more than I could say about you."

"You believe me to be foolish?" Voldemort asked, inclining a thin dark eyebrow in surprise and amusement. "I control the Ministry. I have brought a conquering army to your pathetic island and I am razing it as we speak!"

"We're not conquered just quite yet," Harry growled and raised his wand again as he prepared to duel once again, adrenaline and magic rushing into his veins. Voldemort gave a chilly sneer and raised his own wand, his red eyes gleaming with anticipation as they met their piercing green counterparts.

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During the duel between Voldemort and Harry, they had both drifted away from the main battle, taking a relatively deserted stretch of ground between the one of the side walls and several of the large stone columns. However, the battle between the Aurors, trolls and the newly arrived Death Eaters and the Azkaban Guards, led by Ron Weasley, continued on just as fiercely once the two powerful wizards moved out of sight. Although the Aurors easily outnumbered their enemies, the Azkaban Guards made up for their lack of numbers with superior skill, and the war trolls that may have given the Aurors the edge they needed were occupied as the brass statues hacked at them with their long swords, which struck the enchanted shields relentlessly, creating a shower of purple sparks with each blow. However, with the arrival of the skilled Death Eaters, some trained by Lord Voldemort himself in the Dark Arts, the battle suddenly grew more fierce and desperate.

Volleys of lights shot from the Auror ranks lined up against the doorway, splintering stone as they cracked the massive stone columns where the Azkaban

Guards took cover. The guards on the balconies fired their own barrages of curses, using the advantage of high ground to pick out the weaknesses in the Auror formations. Powerful glittering explosions curses and even an occasional shimmering detonation curse tore through the air, cracking stone and rock as they struck the ground close to the first rank of Aurors or were deflected away by the average but numerous deflecting and shielding charms. Aurors unlucky enough to be too slow with their shields died as they powerful curses tore through their bodies. However, as an Air Staff barraged a small group of heavily shielded Aurors with intense golden pulses of light, the balcony from where the wizard was wielding it suddenly exploded as three Death Eaters send identical balls of blazing fire at it. Ron Weasley and his own elite group of raiders were duelling frantically with the twenty or so Death Eaters that had followed Voldemort in, who glided through the throngs of Aurors, their eyes hard behind their white masks, their wands moving quickly as they cast advanced spells, pounding through the defensive positions of the guards.

A jet of fire streaked through the air as two Death Eaters duelled with Ron, who summoned an icy globe of shimmering pale white and blue magic to surround him with a muttered incantation, parrying the next curse with a grim face, leaping forward while sending a silvery arc of magic towards one of the Death Eaters, who deflected it expertly and responded with a streak of deathly green light. Ron dodged, throwing himself to the side and jumped back up again, his wand flicking rapidly as he duelled skilfully with the black-robed wizards. Suddenly the floor shifted and groaned as it rumbled ominously, a loud splintering noise tearing through the air. Ron and the Death Eaters he was duelling automatically glanced at Voldemort and Harry, who had increased the intensity of their duel as they fought furiously, their magical auras warping around their frames.

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Voldemort was muttering something underneath his breath, too inaudibly for Harry to properly hear as he flicked his wand at the Dark Lord. A familiar jet of sickly green light, radiating death and decay, shot towards Voldemort, who sidestepped the deadly killing curse and lifted his glowing wand over his head and brought it down it a two-handed blow. The stone floor suddenly groaned as a large crack shot through it, zigzagging quickly towards Harry. A fiery red and yellow glow emanated from the cracks as Harry levelled his wand at the wall, the crack almost on him now.

“*Occia!*” He muttered to himself, his destination and trajectory firmly planted in his mind. Harry was lifted off his feet as his personal spell summoned him towards the rocky wall as the crack ripped apart the stone that his feet had been placed on a second beforehand. As Harry zoomed through the air, he levelled his wand at Voldemort, sending a magical shower of shimmering orange barbs, dozens bursting from his wand every second. Voldemort easily deflected the sparkling barbs of piercing magic by conjuring a sleek globe of translucent silver magic, the barbs striking the shield and disappearing in a continual shower of sparks.

Suddenly the cracks that Voldemort had created flared up with an intense wall of searing red and orange flames, rumbling the ground ominously as Harry dropped to the ground, his feet briefly touching the ground before he hurled himself to the right as an *Avada Kedavra* rocketed towards him, breaking off his spell as he did so. He jumped to his feet as the flames died down as Voldemort stalked forward, his robes billowing madly as his magical aura, a faint black and green shimmering emanating from his form as he let loose with a powerful cone of roaring dark magic. Harry conjured a corporeal red shield and raised it, steadying himself as the cone of magic propelled into him. The shield shimmered violently as thin cracks splintered through it and rang with a loud and chilling gong as it bore the brunt of the spell, dispelling the destructive magic in a shower of dark oily sparks.

The shield suddenly shot forward, propelling itself towards Voldemort who looked faintly surprised as he took an involuntary step backwards, making a broad sweeping gesture with his wand. The shield was suddenly and forcefully thrown aside but Harry took the second it had taken Voldemort to act to reach into his robes and throw a handful of small, wooden objects into the air.

Voldemort saw the end of the action was watched Harry warily as he moved into a defensive stance, wondering what exactly his nemesis was up to. He was enlightened an instant later as the wooden objects were enlarged, revealing the features of elaborately carved animals, including three lions, four rabid-looking dogs, two vicious looking hawks and one very large and very fierce looking grizzly bear. Colours suddenly merged into the large, wooden animals as Harry wordlessly transfigured them all into real animals. This strategy, devised by Harry himself, relied on the similarities of the carvings and the actual animals to reduce the time it took for transfiguration into a mere instant. Voldemort, however, was no slouch in conjuration and with a broad sweep of his wand conjured a dozen hissing serpents that rapidly expanded in size until they rivalled his opponents animals.

*"Kill them all"* Voldemort hissed loudly in parseltongue and watched as the large snakes struck out at the various animals Harry had created. One of the snarling and drooling dogs gave a pitiful whine as one of the serpents struck out at it with lightning speed, huge fangs gripping the animal and tossing it across the room, slamming it against a stone pillar. The dog shimmered as it was killed and reverted back to its wooden form, now chipped and broken, but an instant later Harry had transfigured it again and it quickly jumped back up, barking angrily as it raced back into the battle. Meanwhile, the three lions jumped towards one of the snakes, their sharp teeth and powerful jaws ripping past the hard scales and into soft flesh. The snake thrashed madly, trying in vain to swing its tail as it died. One of the other snakes obliged and the three lions were knocked off its prey, growling and snarling menacingly. The grizzly bear, however, slaughtered two of the snakes in less than ten seconds, barrelling forward with the force and power of a moving tank, completely tearing apart one of the snakes with its huge paws

as it crushed another with its awesome strength. The two hawks screeched as they flapped their wings desperately in the air, diving towards the other snakes and attacking the eyes with the sharp beak and talons. Three snakes had already had their eyes turn into a bloody mess and were desperately snapping at the air, their huge mouths sometimes missing the hawks by an inch.

While the battle with the conjured and transfigured animals was taking place, Voldemort and Harry hadn't sat down to watch and instead were hurling quick and furious streaks of light at each other, less powerful but more numerous than before. Sizzling blue spells were deflected aside by sharp flicks of a wand, glittering icy-white streaks absorbed by translucent and powerful shimmering globes of magic, roaring crimson bolts of magic blocked with sturdy conjured corporeal shields. A deadly green streak lanced towards Harry, who made no move to block it as he retaliated in kind by sending his own streak of *Avada Kedavra*. Voldemort merely sneered and with an idle flick of his wand, once again cursing the anti-apparition barriers still in effect around Azkaban, summoned a large crack slab of stone from the floor, which rose up and intercepted the curse, exploding in a flash of green flames, whilst one of Harry's transfigured hawks swooped down and opened its beak, literally swallowing the curse and exploding with a loud screech, flesh reverting back into charred, twisted and unusable wood.

"You're looking a little tired," Harry mocked coldly, deflecting a spiralling cone of cackling lightning. "Do you want a rest, *Tom*?"

"Ah," Voldemort murmured as if something had just dawned on him. "I assume that now is the time we begin insulting each other. Do tell me, is this where I get angry at your use of my birth name and make a mistake in blind rage?"

"If that's how you want to play it, *Tom*," Harry responded, carefully to emphasise the name as the two wizards took a brief pause, watching as the serpents and animals battled each other with unquestionable loyalty to their creators. "But let's move to the part where I ask for crucial details in your plots. Tell me, how did you survive the poisoned dagger?"

Voldemort smiled chillingly, his crimson eyes flaring with amusement and exasperation. "You expected me, the greatest Dark Lord ever to have lived, to be harmed by such a pathetic weapon? Furthermore, you expected that basilisk poison would have an effect on me, a natural-born parselmouth?"

"You're immune to all snake poisons?" Harry absorbed this knowledge with barely concealed surprise.

"Yes," Voldemort hissed softly in reply. "As are all natural-born parselmouths. Those who acquire the skill through rituals or," and here his face tightened slightly in anger. "Through chance and luck, receive no such benefit. You merely

speak the language, Potter. Do not delude yourself into thinking that you possess all of any of the true powers of a Parselmouth."

"Chance?" Harry repeated and something like amusement danced his emerald eyes as he cocked an eyebrow. "That's what you're calling the greatest mistake of your life? Voldemort, you made a terrible mistake and paid the consequences for it. What does it feel like when an *Avada Kedavra* disintegrates your body and ejects your spirit? I imagine that it would be quite painful."

"These pathetic attempts to stall me only serve to demean and degrade yourself," Voldemort hissed menacingly, but his crimson eyes were glinting in anger as he raised his wand, sending forward a sickly-green streak of magic that Harry easily dodged, his face shining with dark enjoyment.

"You'll have to forgive me, *Tom*," Harry responded mockingly. "For some reason, I get a child-like pleasure in insulting your obvious flaws."

Voldemort wordlessly snarled at Harry, his hatred and anger of Harry suddenly overriding his cold logic. Never before had he felt such hatred towards anybody else, not even Dumbledore. The man responsible for thwarting his power numerous times was standing just a few metres away, daring to mock him even as his fortress and Order were being crushed beneath the might of Voldemort's army. His lapse in concentration almost cost him his life as from the battle between the now-mostly dead serpents and animals, a one-ton grizzly bear tore through the innards of one of the snakes and charged towards Voldemort with a roaring snarl.

Voldemort took a step backwards in alarm, making sure to sidestep as Harry used the opportunity to cast a powerful Killing Curse that barely missed Voldemort, his wand rising in an instant. A flash of dark-purple light burst from his wand, radiating with the hate and anger Voldemort poured into it. The grizzly bear gave a dying roar as its head and most of its furry chest was torn asunder by the powerful devastation curse but its momentum didn't alter and Voldemort, even with his enhanced strength, was unable to stop the mangled corpse from crashing into him, sending him sprawling to the ground. As soon as Voldemort fell to the ground, he pushed upwards on the bloody bear corpse on top of him and hurled it away, straight into the path of a killing curse. The bloody and mangled bear corpse was propelled backwards underneath the power of the curse but other than that, remained untouched as Voldemort managed to stagger to his feet, hastily sidestepping another killing curse. The next few seconds became a flurry of action from Harry as he launched his fastest curses at Voldemort. A roaring beam of crimson power was deflected with difficulty as Voldemort batted the spell away with a hastily conjured corporeal shield and conjured a stone wall in front of him that was torn apart by the next curse, a spiralling column of sparkling blue.

Voldemort had just regained his balance and poise when he deflected the next barrage of curses with a deft flick with his wand while swinging his silver and emerald corporeal shield to intercept the others, brushing away shimmering silver arc and lances of magic that tore into the stone floor and wall. However, one of the arcs of magic slipped past his defences and although Voldemort twisted his body in an effort to dodge, the razor-sharp arc of glanced past his hooded head and the Dark Lord let loose a hiss of angry pain. His dark hood, ornately stitched with a bottle-green dark mark, slowly fell to the ground as Voldemort dispelled his conjured shield, his crimson eyes locked onto Harry's suddenly triumphant emerald eyes, and raised his right hand to feel his head. A long jagged slash had been ripped into his pale and bald head, travelling across his head and cutting down in between his right eye and ear. Thick, black blood oozed from the wound and although the injury would have been enough to incapacitate any other witch and wizard- including Harry, pale flesh rippled and stitched back together. But it did not fully heal as vivid red and ugly scar tissue formed, while thick black drops of blood splattered to the ground.

"First blood to me, Voldemort," Harry said, his smile cold and victorious.

Voldemort's eyes flickered to and from the blood on his hand and Harry and his face became extremely dangerous, his eyes flaring up in hatred and rage and he let out a wordless hiss, which sounded very similar to a beastly snarl. Dark magic flickered around his frame as he raised his wand, chaotic energies bursting from the tip of his wand with great force, striking and obliterating a large chunk of the nearest pillar as Harry dodged, and the duelling recommenced.

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In another section of Azkaban, set on the second floor in the very centre of the fortress, Hermione was waving her wand in a series of rapid and complicated gestures, her eyes glinting with power. Six witches and six wizards stood in a semicircle right behind her, chanting melodious Latin phrases as they levelled their wands at her, pouring thin misty blue and red beams of power into her. Hermione, fuelled by the power of twelve other people, had never felt this much magic before and briefly wondered if this was what Harry and Voldemort felt every time they cast a spell. But she shrugged that thought off and continued her chanting, her voice building in crescendo. In front of her, an archway, similar to the one in the Department of Mysteries except it was without the tattered curtain. On the rough stones, runes were appearing in golden glowing lines. Other runes had already appeared and pulsed languidly with a deep green light. In the room around her, huddled groups of civilians watched in silence, some being the muggleborn students and some being the farmers, potion makers and maintenance staff. Over three dozen grim brown-robed men with faces of steel watched the only entrance, their wands held tightly in firm hands. The Azkaban Guards here had been trained for the worst possible scenario and despite their fear, were ready to defend their families and loved ones with every weapon at their disposal.

However, although this mindset was touching, it was no longer needed as Hermione shrieked the final word of the chant, her eyes glittering with power. The archway gave a loud screeching howl, which dove into the very stones of Azkaban and pierced the flesh of everybody in the large room, causing them to shiver uncontrollably as a wave of raw power and a powerful roaring wind swept into the room. The archway entrance, which had been an empty space, shimmered and flickered as it sought its counterpart in Australia and looked somewhat like a malfunctioning television set before a firm and steady picture filled the gap, showing a bright, sunny sky amidst a ruined and crumbling stone room. Three brown-robed wizards looked up from their game of cards in surprise, the skeleton crew of the evacuation point reaching for their wands.

“Now,” Hermione ordered tiredly as she lowered her shaking wand-arm in fatigue, her eyes dimming in exhaustion. Behind her, the wizards and witches who had been assisting her also staggered, the strain of exercising such a spell for so long having a negative impact on their bodies. “Everybody, get through!”

Civilians rushed forward in a civilised manner, directed by the gruff guards as they stepped into the archway. Although they had stepped through a vortex that spanned the entire globe, they felt nothing out of the ordinary as they stepped through the portal in England and stepped out in Australia.

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Meanwhile, Kingsley gripped his wand tightly as he walked softly down the hallways, listening sharply to the dull explosions and screams in the distance. Behind him, the last group of the remaining civilians, a group of twelve muggleborn children aged between eight and fifteen who had been in the furthest Portkey room, followed him wearily, accompanied by both Flitwick's and Kingsley's Raiding team. The dark-skinned wizard cautiously approached a junction and halted the group behind him with a quick flick of his hand. They all stopped as Kingsley raised his wand and with a short swipe, silently produced a soft white mist that seeped through the tip of his wand. The mist oozed into the wall, which shimmered and turned transparent. He inhaled quickly in surprise and took a startled step backwards as Bellatrix Lestrange stared back at him with a superior smirk, her heavily-lidded eyes smouldering with dark pleasure. Behind her, six cloaked and masked Death Eaters stood motionless, their wands clasped in their hands by their sides.

“Hello, little phoenix,” Bellatrix said scratchily, her voice hoarse. “How is my cutesy birdie today?”

Kingsley spun around and almost groaned in defeat as seven other Death Eaters walked into the corridor, their wands levelled straight at them as they approached. The raiding teams quickly hustled the children into a small group, circling them and raising their wands as Bellatrix's group turned the corner, the psychotic witch sporting a maniac grin, baring her teeth as she ran her tongue over her lips.

"Are the itty bitsy children scared of little, bitty me?" She mocked, her high-pitched tone sounding horrible with her rasping voice. The scar across her throat seemed raw, throbbing with red, and Kingsley vaguely wondered if it were due to the proximity of Harry's location. Curse scars caused by dark magic always seemed to react to the presence of its giver, one way or another. "But Bella is happy with you! You've brought back her fun!"

Kingsley saw her eyes flicker over the quivering and terrified muggleborns and an unspoken and unanimous signal passed through the raiding teams. Immediately, blasts of magic burst from several of their wands, powerful and scorching streaks lancing towards the Death Eaters, who moved just as quick and conjured corporeal shields and magical domes of defensive magic. A large brick wall was conjured around the muggleborn students as the raiding teams leapt for the Death Eaters surrounding them. One of them, a shaggy brown-haired man named Duncan, was struck in the chest with a jet of deadly green light and crumpled to the ground, a look of surprise etched on his face. Another Order member named Haldeman, a man with short-blond hair and nervous grey eyes, simply exploded as an explosion curse caught him straight in the face, his body disintegrating under the force of the powerful dark magic. The rest managed to leap into the Death Eaters ranks, their wands flicking madly as they parried and duelled, sparks and deflected curses sizzling through the air. A Death Eater gave a strangled cry, one hand clutching his throat, as he dropped to his knees as a powerful suffocation curse was placed on him. Nobody removed it and he died several seconds later as the powerful force around his throat snapped his neck.

Kingsley was duelling with a well-built tall man, who was spinning around quickly as he threw off powerful streaks of green light, one of which struck the last member of his team, Woods, an arrogant looking man with greying hair, who collapsed to the ground in a limp heap. With a roar of fury, Kingsley bellowed an incantation, a powerful roaring beam of red and yellow magic that enveloped the Death Eater, who was blasted back with a dying cry of agony and the sound of sizzling flesh. Kingsley spun around, flicking his wand to conjure a globe of glowing bronze magic that surrounded him as two streaks of silver light and a thin sleet of icy shards zoomed towards him, which bounced off his powerful shield, the icicles shattering and the curses being deflected aside, one of them hitting a Death Eater in the back and slicing off his head with wet thud. Kingsley responded with a roaring streak of lightning that shot from his wand with a thundering clap, striking and blowing back a Death Eater into a wall. He flicked his wand again, the tip glowing purple as he shot off a lasso of sparkling purple light that wrapped itself around a Death Eaters mask. The Death Eater gave a start of surprise and was killed a second later by a streak of green light that he never saw.

Filius Flitwick was duelling with Bellatrix, who was cackling madly as she twirled gracefully across the battlefield, enjoying the smells of death and battle. Her



violet eyes were glowing in pleasure as she sent a dark wave of sickly brown magic that reeked with foulness and disease towards Flitwick. Flitwick, however, pointed his wand at the wall in an instant and using Harry's own *occia* spell, lifted off the ground and towards the wall, sending an invisible blow of air that struck Bellatrix across her newly formed globe of shining silver magic, before sending off a searing ball of dark purple and ebony flames towards the wall. Flitwick had jumped off the moment his feet had touched it and the fireball struck the stone, which exploded under the blast, shuddering the room. As he landed, he had a brief flash of the battle and his hard look became tinged with anger and sorrow. The Raiding teams, despite their skill, were losing against the Death Eaters. A woman with blonde plaits, dimples and cute green eyes let off a loud scream as a fist-sized hole was blown in her chest. Her lover, a white-haired and dark-eyed man with a permanent look of mischief on his face, cut aside the Death Eater with a roar of fury and a flash of silver but was killed a second later as a streak of green light enveloped his form, blasting him backwards to the ground. Kingsley was duelling furiously with three Death Eaters, parrying their curses with great difficulty as an arc of silver light slashed at his chest, tearing a bloody gouge into his robes. A slight albino woman fell to the ground, her eyes lifeless, and three Death Eaters advanced on the defenceless conjured brick wall, dispelling it with swipes of their wands and looming over the terrified children, the oldest, a fifteen year old boy with dark hair and scared eyes, being blasted aside with a flash of crimson light. He fell to the ground as the *Cruciatius Curse* ran through his body, screaming and thrashing madly in agony.

There were only three Order members left to eight Death Eaters, Flitwick, who continued duelling Bellatrix, Kingsley, who was being driven backwards by three Death Eaters, and a glossy black-haired woman named Melanie who had an air of frailty to her, frailty that was disproved by the sheer power of her spells as she whipped her wand back and forth, deflecting spells and hurling them back in return to a speedy Death Eater, who sent a fast pace of moderate powered curses without rest. It was then that Flitwick silently cast *Occia*, sending himself hurling through the air and dropping to the ground in front of the three Death Eaters torturing the muggleborns. With a determined yet resigned face, Flitwick flicked his wand forcefully, his mastery in Charms allowing him to banish the muggleborns away, picturing the Portal Room in his head. The muggleborns shot down the corridor, propelled by a wave of powerful magic as they veered off into a side corridor and Flitwick, moving in a flash, turned to his two remaining comrades.

"Goodbye, my friends," He squeaked sorrowfully and banished them away. The last thing he saw of them were their surprised faces as they were blasted off their feet by an unexpected attack before he turned to the remaining Death Eaters, who had all raised their wands as Bellatrix approached, her eyes simmering with fury.

*"Explodus Extrendes Imartur!"* Flitwick squeaked with power, his voice reverberating around the corridor as he levelled the wand to his feet, his mind at peace. The last thing he saw was Bellatrix's horrified face as she took a staggered step back, her wand flicking in the first movements of a shielding charm, before a cone of magic struck the ground. The ground grumbled and exploded in a wave of rippling stone and cracking rock, geysers of rocks shards bursting from the ground. Three Death Eaters were killed in the blast, their bodies ripped apart by the powerful charm and two were cut into little ribbons by the flying debris, their bloody corpses barely recognisable. The bodies of the fallen Order members were also torn blasted apart in the explosion, the ground rumbling ominously as the fortress rocked. When the rumbles stopped seconds later, Bellatrix jumped to her feet, a flickering bronze dome of magic surrounding her as she observed her Death Eaters. Two of them remained alive, one moaning and withering on the ground with a bloody stump for a leg while the other one gasped for breath, his eyes wide with fright as he stared at the large shard of rock in his chest. Bellatrix let her violet eyes flash as madness overtook her, her rational mind overridden by her rage and a loud screech of pure hate haunted the hallways as she turned her wand on her fellow Death Eaters, the *Cruciatus Curse* flashing through her wand as she watched with a sick smile, dribbles of spit drooling from her mouth as she shuddered in orgasmic pleasure. It was at this time that a loud piercing howl ran through the fort, but it wasn't enough to penetrate Bellatrix's insanity.

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Harry sidestepped, backing away as he did so to avoid a booming spiralling cone of arctic wind, icy shards powered by a bitter wind slicing through the air. His return spell, a fast golden spear of magic that shimmered with suppressed power, exploded in a shower of golden and silver sparks as Voldemort slashed his wand through the air. Suddenly, a piercing howl echoed through the vast entrance hall, halting Aurors, Death Eaters and Azkaban Guards who were still alive, even as new Aurors continued bursting through the door. Only the few remaining war trolls and intact statues continued battling, their weapons meeting with a shower of purple sparks.

"What is that?" Voldemort hissed out, his crimson eyes flaring with curiosity and suspicion, as he regarded his opponent, who merely levelled his wand at him. Voldemort let his dark magic sear through his veins, a rotten and intoxicating scent only available to Voldemort's magical scent suddenly radiating from him, as he prepped to defend Harry Potter's next attack.

But Harry didn't level his wand at Voldemort and instead aimed it at one of the chipped and badly damaged stone pillars. A thundering and blinding beam of silvery-coiled magic radiating with excess magic, enough to raise the hairs on Harry's arms, struck the pillar. Voldemort raised a shimmering thick globe of silver and green hues as the base of the pillar exploded in a powerful roar of flames, stone splintering and vaporising as the powerful spell tore through it. The

pillar gave an odd creak as cracks shot up its length, shaking madly as it tilted towards the wall as it fell down towards Harry and Voldemort. Harry, using his *Occia* charm, swung through the air as if he were holding a vine, flying past the falling pillar and over the heads of the Aurors, landing at the last fortifications of the Azkaban Guards, a mere twenty-seven wizards and witches led by a bloodied and scorched Ron Weasley, with fourteen badly wounded people lying motionless on the ground with various injuries. Voldemort lifted his wand as the pillar bore down on him, jumping up and sending an invisible roar of magic at nothing in particular, letting himself get blown back by the force of his spell. He landed on his feet, a murderous expression on his face as he swivelled around, ready to face Harry Potter once more.

He was just in time to see the pillar slam into the wall with a booming crash, shaking the room as shattered the stone, crashing through and landing on the ground with such force that a loud rumble ran through the room, sending vibrations across the walls and throwing entire Auror squads off their feet. Voldemort barely kept his balance as his crimson eyes ran over the room, suddenly noticing that the Azkaban Guards were sprinting through a small door, their levitated wounded moving just as fast as they were. The last person to leave the room was Harry Potter, who paused and turned to stare at him from across the room, his green eyes flashing with triumph. Voldemort let out a roar of anger even as the Aurors and Death Eaters advanced quickly, beams and streaks of light bursting towards Harry, who ducked into the doorway and out of sight as a powerful wall of enchanted flames spread over the gap.

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Harry entered the portal room and stopped as he watched the remaining Azkaban Guards strode through the Portal, something akin to pride on his features as he stared at the archway. He noted a bloody Kingsley and a woman he knew as Melanie standing at either side of the portal, their faces grim. He approached them at a jog, his wand whizzing through the air as he silently began the final evacuation procedures.

"Is everybody through?" He asked quickly.

Kingsley nodded, his face smeared with dirt, sweat and blood. "We're the last." He answered softly, his face grim and wearied.

"Flitwick and the rest of our groups are dead," Melanie said softly, her face expressionless but her eyes bursting with emotion.

Harry closed his eyes as if he had been struck but opened them again as he cast the final flick of his spell, dismantling the last of the wards surrounding Azkaban. "Let's go." He commanded with a weary yet strong tone.

As Voldemort burst into the room with three dozen Aurors behind him, his crimson eyes flared in anger as he saw the portal. He levelled his wand, a disc of glowing green light beginning to form, but the portal suddenly shimmered and went dead. A second later, the archway splintered and crumbled away as the rock lost formation, stone dropping to the floor in cracked heaps. The entire fortress was shuddering, a loud rumble sifting the ground. The walls were shaking madly as dust began to filter in through the roof. Voldemort flared his nostrils, using his magical scent to deduce what was happening in an instant.

"The wards have been dismantled completely," Voldemort hissed angrily, his eyes flaring once again. "Potter has removed the preservation spells and the integrity wards!"

The Aurors behind him shifted on their feet but dared not move until their Master did, following after his hasty stride at a jog as the walls began cracking and splintering around them, the fortress falling apart in front of their very eyes.

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Outside the fortress, to the hundreds of Aurors who had not made it inside, the entire island seemed to be shaking madly. Aurors were thrown off their feet and a dragon that had been spurring powerful balls of searing flames at the walls veered away, overtaken by four Auror Flyers that sped away as blurs. Suddenly there was a loud grating noise and a splintering fracture appeared in the east tower, which had been relatively untouched by the assault. Those nearby gave panicked cries as the tower shuddered, cracks shooting through its stones as it collapsed in on itself, tons of stones falling to the ground with a thundering crash. The top floor of the fortress quickly followed suit in a mushroom cloud of dust and a hailstorm of shards of rock. As Lord Voldemort emerged from the charred and twisted remains of the gate, followed by a few dozen Aurors and Death Eaters, there was a roaring boom as the fortress collapsed in on itself, the gigantic stone walls falling backwards onto the fort, gouging through stone walls. The island was shuddering madly as the silent Aurors watched the once impenetrable fortress of Azkaban collapse. After a few minutes, the low and deep rumbles in the ground came to a halt and the Dark Lord, his crimson eyes leaving the ruined fortress, turned to his Aurors, a twisted smile on his face.

"*Morsmordre!*" The Dark Lord roared in triumph, his wand levelled towards the sky. As a roaring silver and green coil of magic rocketed from the tip of his wand, forming into a gigantic leering skull with a crimson-eyed serpent emerging from its mouth, the hundreds of Aurors gave loud cheers of triumph that echoed around the devastated island, some raising their wands and letting loose showers of glittering sparks that lit up the night.

Azkaban had fallen and the Order of Phoenix was all but destroyed.

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## **The Daily Prophet**

### ***Azkaban Island Has Fallen!***

### ***Dark Lord Leads Aurors to crush Order of Phoenix!***

*By Special Correspondent Maria Skeeter*

*Department of Media Affairs*

*Last Night, an army of Aurors and several dozen of elite Death Eaters, led by the Dark Lord himself, stormed the once-though impenetrable fortress of Azkaban, home of the illustrious terrorist group, The Order of Phoenix. The Dark Lord revealed his true, ultimate power as he ripped through the powerful wards of the former prison while around him, courageous and noble Aurors battled against the criminals and murderers of the Order. After an hour of heavy fighting, where countless Order members and approximately four-hundred and twenty seven Aurors lost their lives, the Dark Lord breached the fortress of Azkaban and met with the mastermind of the Order of Phoenix, Harry Potter in combat. Harry Potter, while cowardly and pathetic, is nonetheless powerful, but after ten minutes of duelling with the Dark Lord, he fled the island, taking the last remnants of his Order with him and leaving the Ministry forces victorious.*

*This strike comes as a carefully planned strategy in response to recent cries of action against the Order. Within the last month, the Order had tripled its raids. Diagon Alley, Hogsmeade, Hogwarts, Morsmordre Island and the Ministry of Magic itself had been attacked and hundreds of innocent wizards and witches killed mercilessly. Such attacks had not been seen for over twenty-years, since the formation of the Dark Lord as the rightful head of the Ministry of Magic, and some wizards and witches had started doubting the Dark Lord's true power.*

*"The Order of Phoenix is finally crushed," A representative of the Ministry of Magic told the Daily Prophet today. "Harry Potter has fled once more like the coward he is. His island fortress is destroyed; his supporters are mostly dead and his powerbase has been crippled by the Dark Lord. How can people doubt the Dark Lord after this?"*

*However, war may be on the horizon as the Ministry of Magic scours the ruins of Azkaban in search for information. Unconfirmed sources inside the Ministry have informed us that one of our allied Wizarding nations may have been aiding the Order of Phoenix against us all. If such reports are true, the Dark Lord and all of Wizarding Britain cannot let such treachery and betrayal go unchecked. In a mere matter of hours or days, the Ministry may be forced to declare war against such a cowardly nation...*

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## **Salem Scrolls**

### ***The Order of Phoenix driven from Britain!***

#### ***Harry Potter forced to flee as Azkaban crumbles around him!***

*The Order of Phoenix, a terrorist group of much acclaim and popularity here in the United States, have been driven away from Britain as last night, Lord Voldemort and British Aurors invaded the Island Fortress of Azkaban, destroying the wards and the fortress. The Order of Phoenix and the Ministry Aurors clashed both inside and outside of the fortifications as Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort, wizards internationally recognised as being some of the most powerful wizards this century, clashed in a spectacle of magic. Sources report that although Lord Voldemort managed to crush the Order in a single night, the self-proclaimed Dark Lord received minor injuries from the wand of Harry Potter, who is believed to have escaped relatively unharmed.*

*The fall of Azkaban signifies a closure to a civil war that has been raging in Britain for the better part of fifty years. The Order of Phoenix, once led by Albus Dumbledore, were once the prime resistance against Lord Voldemort before his ascension as Head of the British Ministry of Magic, where he was regarded as an internationally recognised dark wizard and terrorist responsible for the death of thousands. Their destruction gives Lord Voldemort full reign over the British Isles and allows him to finally and completely consolidate his reign over Britain.*

*The fall of the Order of Phoenix has been met with mixed replied here in the United States of America. Supporters of Harry Potter and his cause are devastated and grieving over this massive blow while those who oppose Harry Potter and his methods celebrate with dreams of peace in mind.*

*“Harry Potter is a good man and although some of his methods are questionable, what else could he have done in his position?” A supporter of Harry Potter, Mathew Elliot, aged 78, commented. “With this defeat, darkness had finally overtaken everything Britain once stood for. It won’t be long before the entire world is regretting this day when Lord Voldemort finally reveals his true designs for the world.”*

*“Potter is a terrorist, a man who thrives on pain and battle, a man who has been responsible for the deaths of thousands in the past twenty years,” An opponent of Harry Potter said, Jenna Gleeson, aged 34. “With this defeat, he might get the hint and allow Britain some well-deserved peace for once. But, I sincerely doubt that and I’m sure we’ll be hearing about him soon.”*



*As our Warlock Congress extends its congratulations and well-wishes to Lord Voldemort for the defeat of the terrorist organisation, the Auror forces of America have been placed on high alert "in relation to matters of national security." This reporter cannot help but wonder whether the Warlock's Congress are fearful of Harry Potter and his Order of Phoenix starting up a base here in the United States or an impending invasion by the British Ministry of Magic, a fear that has been whispered quietly behind closed doors. One thing is for sure, with the Order of Phoenix no longer interfering in Lord Voldemort's plans, all Wizarding nations are watching Britain with bated breath as they await the superpower's next move.*

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Since Lord Voldemort had taken over the Ministry of Magic, the building itself had come to exude an aura of darkness and fear. Ministry workers would scurry through the atrium, ignoring their colleagues who hurried next to them as they walked past the unmoving Death Eaters, their downcast eyes only rising as they unwillingly observed the Fountain of the Loyal, where three statues of proud Death Eaters stood, one with his wand raised into the air. From this wand came a large glowing dark mark that stood out on the ceiling, green and silver light reflecting to the ground as a constant reminder of the Dark Lord's power. It was only when the Ministry workers had passed the atrium and the Death Eaters and had reached their offices when they began to relax, joking and laughing with their colleagues. However, a flicker of wariness and fear remained in their eyes as they worked and rested, knowing that the Department of the Disposal of Renegades constantly employed the services of spies in order to ferret out any sign of disloyalty within the Ministry. Today, this wariness and fear as gone and Ministry employees laughed and joked with relief and happiness as they walked through the atrium. Many of them held copies of the Daily Prophet in their hands as they chatted rapidly about the fall of Azkaban and the defeat of Harry Potter, the murdering sociopath who, as the Daily Prophet constantly informed them, thrived in death and constantly murdered good and loyal Ministry workers and their families. For once, the people of the Ministry felt a measure of safeness come back in their lives. Sure, the Dark Lord was dangerous and you had to be careful when you spoke to someone, but Harry Potter, as they had been told, was much worse.

Deep in the Ministry, past the lively offices and departments and several dozen Auror guards, Lord Voldemort sat at the head of a thick, oak table as he watched the Heads of the various Departments and other loyal servants talk softly with each other. His crimson eyes flared as he leant back into his throne-like chair, his black robes settling into the shadows with a barely noticeable ruffle. As Voldemort raked his eyes over the tables, they came to rest on an empty chair seated only two seats away on Voldemort's left. Draco Malfoy had not been seen since the battle of Azkaban, indeed, there were few who remembered seeing him before the attack. Voldemort knew about Draco's traitorous activities and his unfortunate habit of selling information to the French and had come to use the man as a constant source of misinformation, allowing incorrect information to

spread through the world in preparation for his eventual offensive. But it was coming to seem more and more like Draco Malfoy had either fled in fear or he had been killed. If he had fled, there were few places where Voldemort's assassins could not reach him and soon the man would be dead. If the man was dead, Voldemort would find out who had killed him and why. For a brief moment, Voldemort considered that perhaps the Department of the Disposal of Renegades had finally caught wind of Malfoy's activities, but considering that Malfoy was very discrete in his double-dealing and that he had married the Head of the Department of the Disposal of Renegades, that seemed unlikely. Mentally clearing his head of such thoughts, Voldemort glanced away from the chair to his right, where Bellatrix Lestrange sat silently, a sullen look on her face.

"What is the matter, Bella?" Voldemort asked softly, but his hissing voice was heard by all and they immediately fell silent as Bellatrix turned to face her Lord, reverence on her face. "You do not seem to be as pleased as the others of our most recent success."

Bellatrix did not say a word as she kept her poise, her purple eyes blank of emotion as she stared straight ahead and her posture proud and firm. Voldemort let his eyes rake over the other men and women sitting at the table, who straightened as his gaze passed over them.

"Indeed Bella, why should you not be celebrating along with everybody else?" Voldemort asked quietly. His eyes flared and as quick as lightning, he reached out and grabbed Bellatrix by the chin with two long, spindly fingers, forcing her face to meet his as he wound his other hand in her silky dark hair. Bellatrix's eyes flashed with fear but she kept her stoic face as she regarded her master.

"Master, Harry Potter is not dead," Bellatrix answered softly. "And I cannot be happy until he is dead!"

"Very good, Bella," Voldemort praised silkily, letting go of her chin but keeping a hand on her head, absently stroking the dark strands. "It is a fact that many here seem to have forgotten."

The people around the table stiffened as Voldemort let his displeasure show on his face, a carefully constructed look that promised death and destruction, a look only magnified by the disturbing glint in his crimson eyes as he let them flare, his hand gripping Bellatrix's hair tighter and tighter as he continued talking.

"Azkaban has fallen, yes, but the Order of Phoenix, while having suffered a crippling blow, has not been destroyed!" He hissed furiously. "You celebrate here, rejoicing that Azkaban has fallen, yet you fail to acknowledge that the fortress was but a tool of the Order and tools can be replaced! Harry Potter is not dead! *He* was the true target that night, the one reason why I personally accompanied



our Auror forces out to that wretched island! Without his death, the Order of Phoenix will not be deterred!"

The table was completely silent except for one escaped whimper from Bellatrix as Voldemort's ripped his hand from her hair, taking several of her long locks in the process and throwing them carelessly to the ground. He stood up, his form radiating a sinister deadliness as he started pacing around the table, absently enjoying the stiffening postures as he walked past his servant's backs.

"Once again, my most loyal servants, we have been thwarted," He hissed softly and let the words sink into the very stone of the room. "We may have won the battle of Azkaban, but Harry Potter, by remaining alive and escaping us, has won the war. Once again, we may have to delay my plans until this constant thorn in my side has been eradicated."

"Master, surely we can..." One of the department heads, a young wizard with an arrogant face and pale, unblemished hands started, before Voldemort spun around, his wand somehow appearing in his hand in an instant.

"*Crucio!*" Voldemort hissed and let the roaring chaotic powers in his body flood into his wand as lust for pain swept into his mind. There was a dark flash of crimson and the man screamed in agony as he was blasted from his seat by the power of the spell and onto the cold, hard ground, twisting and flailing madly as pain wracked into his mind. Drool escaped from his lips as he arched his back so hard that a resounding snap echoed in the room over the sound of screaming as one of the man's ribs snapped. Voldemort briefly allowed amusement to wash across his face before he jerked his wand away from the man, stalking back to his seat. The tortured department head stopped flailing madly but lay there limply, his only movements being the constant shuddering and wracks of pain.

"There will need to be some alterations of our plans," Voldemort said softly, ignoring the darted looks to the tortured man on the ground. "I will tell you what I need and what I have in mind and you will listen carefully without interruption lest you end up like the man on the ground. I had originally intended to use France for our endeavours, but after some research on the portal that lay within Azkaban, Australia may have become a better choice."

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While the sun had only risen three or four hours again in Britain, in Australia, it was a three or four hours until the sun was due to set. In the musty and crumbling ruins of New Azkaban, the Heads of the Order of Phoenix met in a small and relatively untouched rocky room, sitting on conjured armchairs around a large stone table. The walls shimmered with a delicate white glow, which subtly pulsed around the room as the privacy wards kept out any unwelcome intruders. Although the Australian Ministry were unaware of their presence for the moment, it wouldn't be long before they were discovered and as such, the remaining

Azkaban Guard kept close watch on the rows of temporary tents that housed the civilian population of Azkaban and patrolled the crumbling ruins with diligence.

At the head of the table, Harry eased back in his chair and rested away the after-effects of his duel as he watched those around this table. Hermione Weasley sat next to her husband, Ron, fussing over a tightly-wound bandage around the scarred redhead's arm, a side-effect of being struck by a Dark Flame Curse. He would be fine within a matter of days, but had the curse been any stronger, it would have been a very different story.

Neville Longbottom and Ginny Weasley sat on his left, talking softly amongst themselves with serious looks on their faces. They had been some of the first people to be evacuated from Azkaban because of both their average skill in duelling and their knowledge of Order missions and restricted information and as such, escaped unharmed. Ginny had been working for the past twelve hours on healing potions while Order agents had discreetly used the new-found gold gained in the Pucey Kidnapping to augment the Order stores of various Healing Potions and other medicinal brews.

Luna sat in the corner by herself, absently stroking her green two-headed rabbit. For a moment, Harry stared at his own conjuration. According to various stories being passed around by the survivors of Azkaban, Luna had enlarged the rabbit and placed some charms and spells on it that not even Harry had heard of. When a small group of Aurors had broken through the fortifications of Azkaban and stumbled into the hospital, they had been met with both the final product of Luna's charms and a very grisly and untimely demise.

"The situation is bad," Harry said softly and the five wizards and witches around him immediately stopped talking as they fixed their eyes on him, bleak and grim expressions echoed on their very faces. "We have lost Azkaban, our base, our fortress, our home. We have lost stocks of weapon and potions and information. We have lost half of the Azkaban guard, including some of our very best- such as Flitwick."

"What happened?" Hermione asked. "How did Voldemort get an agent into Azkaban? How did Phillip manage to get past our screening?"

"We underestimated Voldemort and we overestimated ourselves," Harry said grimly. "In his time as a spy, Phillip gave us vital information on Voldemort's activities. We saved over twelve Muggleborns because of him and we raided three warehouses, killing over twenty Aurors. The information he gave us was legitimate and useful and we forget that Voldemort would allow such losses if it would serve him in the long run. We also overestimated our defences. Azkaban had been our home for twenty years. We thought we were safe."

"What do we do now?" Ron asked gloomily after a moments silence had fallen over the table. "Voldemort has all but beaten us."

"We are crippled, Ron, not broken and certainly not defeated," Harry responded sharply. "You all know by now that I have a deep-cover spy in the Ministry. Because of this spy's presence, I had started planning an invasion of sorts on the Ministry. Once the Horcruxes had all been destroyed, we were going to launch this invasion. It was meant to be put into places in months, maybe years, but if we want to strike back effectively it has to be done soon."

"Strike back?" Neville asked in complete surprise. "Harry, how are we going to strike back? We don't have the men..."

"We still have fifty or so fighters," Harry interrupted. "It should be enough for what I have in mind. The first stage will only require the raiders. There are only three teams left, so we'll need to use some Guards in some diversion attacks, but it can be done."

"It's only been a day since Azkaban fell!" Ginny said scratchily, the scars on her face prominent as she frowned.

"Exactly," Harry said grimly and with a sense of satisfaction. "They'll expect a counter-attack; I wouldn't put it past Voldemort to think any less, but not so soon. If we attack, say, tomorrow, and cause enough chaos, we're going to strike away the morale gained from the siege of Azkaban and really cause trouble for the Ministry. Not even Voldemort will consider such an early retaliation. It will throw them off balance, which is exactly what we need."

"That may work well for the first time," Ron agreed. "But afterwards, there will be Aurors on everything. They'll double the guard, hell, maybe even triple it."

"Exactly," Harry responded with a cold smile. "I want to lure most of them to Hogwarts, make them think that the castle is our target. It would make sense, the seemingly desperate Order searching for another fortress to hide in. Right now, we can't do anything until I get some information from my spy, but get everybody prepared for another battle."

As he stood up, Ron could only stare at his form with puzzlement and disbelief, his expression mirrored by everybody except Luna, who watched Harry like a hawk, her dreamy face suddenly sharp and calculative.

"Where are you going?" Ron asked quickly, also standing up.

"Back to England," Harry answered as he picked up a small rock, flicking his wand at it. "Like I said, we need information and I'm going to have to personally get it."

The rock glowed in a blue light as it rumbled ominously, loud cracking noises echoing in the room as Harry poured power into his portkey. Suddenly the rumbling stopped as quickly as it had started and Harry looked at it with satisfaction as he grasped the newly made International Portkey in his left hand, his wand clenched tightly in his right.

“What’s the true target?” Ron called, just as Harry disappeared without a sound.

There was a moments silence around the table as Harry’s five most trusted friends regarded each other with looks of incredulity and disbelief, their minds still catching up to what had just happened. Finally, Ron sighed with resignation and walked for the door.

“Where are you going?” Neville called after him in surprise.

“I’ve got to go and prepare the Guard, don’t I?” Ron asked with a certain amount of grimness in his voice. “We all have to be ready for what Harry has planned.”

“But...” Neville started to protest, his tanned skin pale with emotion.

“He’s never let us down,” Ron said quietly. “I don’t think he’s going to start now.”

Neville had nothing to say for that as Ron left and sank back down into his seat, wondering what exactly was going to happen.

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Harry felt a powerful tug on his navel as he was suddenly lifted away from the small room in New Azkaban and into a whirlwind of flashing colours. Unlike a regular portkey, this tug did not remain at his navel and quickly spread over his body as he was pulled and tugged through the whirling spectrum of colours. He squeezed his eyes shut as the flashes of light drove into his skull, pounding away with painless but heavy blows. This feeling continued for what seemed like hours but in reality, a few minutes, before Harry suddenly felt himself shoot out of the vortex and land on cold, damp stone. Immediately, he jumped to his feet with his wand in his hand, his dazed eyes furiously checking the surroundings as he struggled to clear his head. He was in a large and mostly empty stone room. A couple of dimly lit torches blazed on one of the walls and a battered stairwell spiralled upwards on the other side of the cold, dark room. Despite this room’s appearance, it was a location that Harry’s spy had created to allow Harry access past the numerous wards surrounding the manor with ease. It also hid the powerful magical resonance of an international portkey from the Ministry of Magic. With his wand clasped in his hand, Harry approached the stairway and started up it to meet his spy.

He emerged from a small broom closet in a well-furnished and rich hallway. Ducking his head, Harry climbed out of the small cupboard and closed it behind

him as he darted his eyes down the hall. There were no portraits in this particular section of the house, nor were there any portraits in the large study where he was to meet his spy. He had rarely visited his spy's manor before as to keep their identity and true loyalties secret from any wandering visitors or guests. The few times he had, it was to instruct them in more advanced Occlumency techniques, brief them on confidential information that Harry didn't trust to have on parchment or have some long and serious discussions. Approaching the study door, he opened it and stopped short as surprise flickered on his face at the view in front of him. The study was a large room decked in soft green and silver colours. Thick carpets of gleaming white fur covered the ground and a bar filled to the stock with bottles of wine and crystal goblets was nestled into the corner. A large roaring fireplace nestled in the back wall and next to the fireplace, in front of a large bookshelf stacked with study tomes, was a small, polished table and two comfortable armchairs. In these chairs sat Pansy Malfoy and Linden Avery, both who looked up with faces filled with shock. Harry stared back at them with a look of calculation directed at the unexpected witch before he let his eyes meet those of his spy.

"I need some information from you," He told her softly.

"Information?" The spy murmured in surprise, darting a glance at her companion. "Of course. I am your most loyal, after all."

"Most loyal?" The other woman echoed softly, her face filling with dread. She jumped up from her chair, the spy following suit, her wand flying into her hand as she rounded on her companions, but the spy had already levelled her wand at the woman's head.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" The spy cast and a deathly coil of radiating green light struck the woman, sending her body crumpling to the ground with a look of eternal surprise on her face. The sound of roaring wind faded as the spy lowered her wand and turned to Harry.

Harry watched as the spy approached him and his hard face softened, a smile of true affection appearing on his face as warmth flooded his now-sparkling green eyes. The spy stood in front of him, her face uncertain as she touched him almost reverently. Suddenly she launched herself into his arms and Harry closed them around her, running a hand through her silky hair.

"Azkaban..." Was all she managed to get out and Harry sighed softly.

"We have a plan, but once again I'm going to need your help." He murmured into her hair.

The spy pulled back and composed herself, but warmth radiated from her face and eyes as she directed Harry to a nearby seat. Harry smiled at her and took his

seat as he flicked his wand as the spy walked to the small bar, summoning a bottle of wine. The woman's body on the ground shimmered and twisted as it quickly morphed into a small dirty white bone, which promptly flew into his hand and into his pocket as the spy returned with two crystal goblets of sparkling wine.

"Thankyou," Harry said as he took the glass offered to him and without hesitation, took a sip, letting the fruity flavour wash down his throat. He glanced over at his spy and noticed that she had noticed the act of trust he had just performed for her and was glowing with pleasure.

"What do you need of me?" The spy asked as she settled herself into the chair next to Harry, watching him intently.

"I need information about certain ward structures and the magical signatures that have been granted access to the wards. I need an opening within the Ministry in two days times for an army and I need to know where the last Horcrux is," Harry answered bluntly, but sporting a faint look of apology.

The spy's face didn't change at all as she took a sip of her wine. "I was at a meeting with Dark Lord several days ago when I saw a golden chain with a locket much like the one you described to me around his neck. I presume that that was the Horcrux. I was planning on informing you but the Ministry went into lockdown the day before the Dark Lord commenced his invasion on Azkaban."

"After his Horcrux was stolen from Hogwarts, he probably presumes that only he himself can protect them," Harry murmured softly to himself, his green eyes speculative.

"Why didn't he put it on before?" The spy asked with curiosity.

"I presume that he didn't want to invite an attack on himself," Harry answered her and smiled thinly. "This works for me perfectly."

"I have been gathering the ward information for some time," The spy remarked and stood up, placing her goblet on the gleaming table beside her as she raised her wand. She muttered no words but a small rectangular patch of parchment zoomed from the fireplace, ignoring the blazing flames and flying straight into the spy's hand. She handed it to Harry, who accepted it wordlessly as he pocketed the shrunken stack of parchment.

"That's all I have at the moment," The spy told him softly. "For your other request, I may be able to let your forces into the atrium but no further and I will be revealing my true loyalties if I do so."

"The atrium will be perfect," Harry answered her softly and a look of concern entered his eyes. "If you are in any danger at all, then perhaps..."

"I will do it," The spy remarked quickly. "Never doubt my loyalty."

"I never do," Harry remarked softly, which earned a beaming smile from the spy. "You just look after yourself,"

"Of course I will," the spy said and a devious smile came over her face. "If I don't, you can come and rescue me."

"If I have to," Harry replied and sent a smile at the spy. "I have to leave if I want to implement my plans."

"You'll have your opening," The spy promised and Harry cocked his head, his green eyes glittering with affection and pride.

"If this works, it will be all over," He made his own promise and ducked out of the study door, leaving behind his most loyal supporter.

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Harry reappeared via his international portkey in New Azkaban to a flurry of activity. Brown robed Azkaban Guards were hurrying from the camp of enchanted tents, their faces grim and determined as they moved quickly, talking to one another in low voices. Some of them wore bandages or sported canes and limps, testament to the battle they had been fighting in just a day ago. There were only about thirty eight of them lining up and Harry frowned, seeking out Ron in the crowd and quickly striding over to him.

"Is this all we have?" He asked in a soft voice as he watched them form up. Ron shook his head slightly. "There's another twenty six of them in the temporary medical wing. Luna said that at least twenty of them should be able to fight before tomorrow."

"Close to sixty then," Harry said a touch heavily. "It should be enough."

"I hope I'm not sending them to their deaths here, Harry," Ron murmured softly as he swivelled his head to gaze at his friend, his face hard and a touch disapproving.

"With this you're not," Harry replied and dove into his pocket, pulling out the shrunken stack of parchment and handing it to the redhead next to him. Ron took it doubtfully and enlarged the first sheet, his eyes scanning the parchment. His doubt cleared up as he looked up in complete surprise.

"These are the ward configurations around a major Ministry warehouse!" He said in amazement. "And there's more!"

“Get them to the analysts and we’ll be able to sneak right past,” Harry said with a small grin and watched in amusement as Ron hurried over to a large white pavilion, ducking into it quickly. He turned back to the formed up squad and schooled his features as he approached them.

“Yesterday, we all suffered a great loss,” Harry said, his eyes narrowed as he stared at the men and women of the Azkaban Guards. “We have been driven from Azkaban Island, we have lost much of our equipment but more importantly, we have lost many of our friends. But we cannot give up now. If we accept this defeat and scurry back to the dark corners in fear, then we let Voldemort win. If Voldemort wins, then England is truly lost forever. If Voldemort wins, then countless hundreds of Muggleborns will be left to his cruel tendencies. If Voldemort wins, then everything we have suffered for in the past half-a-century will have been for nothing.”

“I can safely say for myself that I won’t let him win. I won’t stop at the moment when Voldemort is at his weakest and he is at his weakest. We are at the bottom, ladies and gentlemen, and the only way off the bottom is to climb up. I have devised a plan for the next two days that will take advantage of our unfortunate and tragic losses at Azkaban. Voldemort and the Ministry will believe us to be weakened. They will not be expecting this. Tomorrow, we will launch a series of raids that will serve to confuse and demoralise the enemy. The day after that will hopefully be the last battle the Order needs to participate in. In two days time, if everything goes right, we will have won the war and Lord Voldemort will have been destroyed!”

Although there was no cheering, the men and women of the Azkaban Guard straightened with a mixture of determination and resolve. They had been beaten, yes, but they were not broken, and now it seemed like Harry Potter had a plan. Perhaps something good could come out of all of this after all.

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It was well during the night, after most of the Azkaban Guard participating in tomorrow's attacks were resting, when the intruders arrived. Harry had been sitting in a comfortable and conjured armchair by one of New Azkaban's crumbling fireplaces, reading over the reports of the analysts who had gone over the information given to him by his spy. Despite what his spy had said, the information she had provided was more than enough for a handful of quick and decisive raids, just enough to lure the Aurors away from the Ministry of Magic the following day. As he read through one of the last reports, somebody knocked on the rotting wooden door of the small room he had taken.

“Enter,” He called out as he glanced up from the parchment in front of him, his wand appearing in his hand with in a single darting movement.



He watched as Ron entered the room, looking extremely uncomfortable as he was followed by two wizards and a witch dressed in business-like dark robes, their faces stern and blank. The woman, a grey-haired crone with a limp, approached him, leaning on her cane as she walked, while the two wizards stood by the door. By the look of their robes, they seemed to be Australian Rangers, their equivalent to an Auror.

"You've really done it this time, Potter," The woman croaked out angrily in a distinctive Australian accent. "And now we're going to pay for it."

"What are you talking about?" Harry asked, his green eyes narrowing as he stood.

The old crone gave a harrumph of derision tinged with desperation and threw a newspaper at his chest. Harry quickly caught it with his superior reflexes and glanced down at it. It appeared to be a special afternoon edition of the Daily Prophet and as Harry read, dread and speculation gripped his heart.

### **The Daily Prophet**

#### ***Australia Aids the Order of Phoenix!***

#### ***Australian Ministry supports Harry Potter!***

#### ***The Dark Lord Declares War!***

*By Special Correspondent Maria Skeeter*

*After a mere half-days examination of the ruins of Azkaban, the Ministry of Magic has determined that the Order of Phoenix was being funded and armed with Australian wands and money. Once a former British penal colony, it seems that Australia has not lost its criminal tendencies and continues to defy British law with its sizable contributions to Harry Potter and his terrorist organisation, the Order of Phoenix. Further evidence garnered by the investigation teams also suggest that Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix fled to Australia after yesterday's destruction of Azkaban.*

*In response to this startling information, the Ministry of Magic, led by the Dark Lord, has declared war on the corrupt Australian Ministry of Magic. Our glorious Auror's are already moving into position as the Dark Lord prepares to extract revenge on the nation that betrayed us all. Let all of our thoughts be with our family and friends within the Ministry Department of Magical Law Enforcement as they go to once again fight for our future. Only when the Order of Phoenix and all of its allies have been destroyed will England be truly safe.*

*For more information, see:*

*Page 2: Australian History: How British Criminals formed a government*

*Page 3: The Order of Phoenix and Australia: Possible connections*

*Page 4: Ministry of Magic: How equipped for a war are we?*

"Thanks a lot, Potter," The woman spat out with blazing anger. The two Aurors standing guard at the door were watching him very closely. "You've just dragged us into a war!"

Harry opened his mouth to say something but the woman raised her hand, her face pale and her nostrils flaring with anger.

"We want you gone from our borders by tomorrow," She continued angrily. "If Voldemort is able to find more evidence that the Order has fled here, nobody in the International Magical Community will aid us. We may have supported your cause discreetly, but we are in no position to win a war against the most powerful magical nation in the world."

"Give us two days," Harry broke in quietly. "Two days to settle our affairs and either way, we'll be gone."

The woman paused in consideration but finally agreed with a short, jerky nod of her head. With a flick of her hand, she summoned the two Australian Rangers to follow her as she stalked from the room, escorted by two brown-robed Azkaban Guards and leaving Harry and Ron alone in the room.

"This could work for us," Harry murmured quietly. "If Voldemort wants a war, he'll have to employ a large number of Aurors away from England."

Ron opened his mouth in objection but sighed and closed it again. He regarded Harry with a wry look and walked for the door.

"Good night Harry," He said softly and closed the door, leaving Harry to his thoughts.

After a few minutes, Harry picked up the reports and started reading again, imprinting the words into his very brain. Tomorrow was going to have to be executed perfectly if it was going to fool Voldemort.

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In the middle of the sunny Mediterranean Sea, just a few dozen kilometres from the island nation of Malta, the sun beamed down on a small island roughly the same size as the isle where the former Azkaban Fortress had been built. On this small island, hidden behind layers and domes of muggle repelling wards and protective wards to rival any other in the entire world, was a gigantic pyramid large enough to rival the Great Pyramid in Egypt. This pyramid had been built thousands of years ago, when Egypt had been the premier magical society in the world, in honour of a peace accord with the newly discovered magical societies in Europe. The Egyptian empire crumbled away a few hundred years later after a series of bloody civil wars and magically-induced plagues and droughts and the pyramid was left abandoned. Some thousands of years later, in the 1700's, it was rediscovered and became home to the International Confederation of Wizards, the largest magical embassy and ambassadorial organisation in the world.

Inside this pyramid beyond the plush and expensive fur carpets and the largely ornate suits of gleaming gold and silver armour lay a very large room vaguely resembling a muggle courtroom. Three ancient wizards sat in a high gleaming wooden bench, their traditional robes glimmering with jewels and wealth as they watched the proceedings beneath them. They were the Supreme Mugwumps, the overseers of the International Confederation of Wizards. Below them, a large stage was currently occupied by two collected and calculative wizards, while around this stage were dozens of occupied benches full of the ambassadorial wizards and witches from all over the globe. The half-a-dozen or so more prominent nations sat closer to the stage, watching and interacting with the proceedings, while the dozens of lesser nations sat silently at the back. Like the overseers of the International Confederation of Wizards, all were also playing close attention to the speech of the British and Australian ambassadors as they parried words and duelled with their tongues, their eyes narrowed at their counterparts, their minds well aware of the audience they had and the extreme importance of their job.

“...And what evidence does the British Ministry have to prove these ridiculous allegations?” said the Australian Ambassador, a slightly porky man with cold, shrewd eyes and tanned blonde hair. “So far, this Confederation has only heard that Lord Voldemort appears to have, how do the muggles say it, jumped the gun?”

The British ambassador, a tall, thin and sallow man with slick dark hair and a permanently sneering face, suppressed a flinch as his mouth worked as if he had just tasted something unpleasant.

“Lord Voldemort has not acted pre-emptively here,” he said slowly. “It is you who declared war on us by aiding an organisation that has, for the past twenty years,

sought for the downfall of the legitimate government. And kindly do not associate such...muggle...expressions with my Lord again."

"I'm sorry, Mr Ambassador," said the Australian Ambassador, sounding anything but as a slow and sly smile curved his lips. "But not all of us here hold your...rigid preconceptions...concerning our non-magical counterparts."

"Legitimate government?" Another Ambassador spoke up from the audience, a large, bulky wizard with balding grey hairs, a thick grey beard and an atrocious American accent. "Your government took power through force. I would hardly claim a coup as legitimacy."

"That is the nature of all new regimes," the British Ambassador shot back quickly. "Let us not forget your country who overthrew us over two hundred and fifty years ago. Can we claim that your government gained control by force and therefore, is not legitimate?"

The American ambassador looked furious as he shifted in his seat, leaning forward and opening his mouth as his eyes glittered angrily. He never got the chance to speak as there was a loud boom from the head podium as one of the ancient wizards flicked his wand casually. Silence fell over the room as he cleared his throat, squinting forward.

"We are not here to discern the legitimacy of either the British Ministry of Magic or the American Warlocks Congress," he said in a raspy and mumbling voice. "We are here to address the issue of the sudden and hasty declaration of war submitted by Lord Voldemort, ruler of the British Isles, against the Australia Parliament of Magical Society."

"Thankyou, Supreme Mugwump," the Australian Ambassador said loudly, throwing a look of triumph at the British Ambassador. "As you said, this declaration is indeed hasty and from what we've seen so far, lacking in any legitimate motive save that Lord Voldemort is getting power-hungry."

The British Ambassador smiled chillingly and whipped out his wand, flicking it towards his bag lying on his empty bench. A bundle of tightly wound scrolls zoomed towards him and landed on the small podium in front of him. With a few more casual flicks with his wand, one of the scrolls unbound and rolled out as it started levitating in front of the ambassador.

"Alexander Mortimer, aged thirty-four, Auror," the British Ambassador began in a cold voice. "Rebecca Cartwright, aged twenty-one, Auror. Mark Kinielly, aged fifty-six, Auror. Theodore Nott, aged twenty, civilian, Daphne Greengrass, aged twenty, civilian, Natalie Atwell, aged fifty-four, Department of Magical Games, Jonathon..."

"What is this?" The Australian Ambassador interrupted with a tone vaguely tinged with annoyance.

"This is a casualty list dating back since the inception of Lord Voldemort as Head of the British Ministry of Magic," the British Ambassador said coldly. "By aiding the Order of Phoenix, the Australian Parliament of Magical Society holds a degree of culpability in every single murder the Order of Phoenix and Harry Potter has committed. Do not question us about our legitimate motives!"

The Australian Ambassador looked like he had been slapped, his mouth opening and closing without making any sound as the ambassadors watching erupted into a wave of hushed mutters.

"You...cannot possibly be...serious with those charges!" the Australian Ambassador stuttered with shock as he gestured widely with his hands, an expression of outrage washing over his face.

"Oh, but I am," said the British Ambassador smugly, his eyes glinting in dark amusement. "It is the key motive for our declaration of war."

The French Ambassador, the only female in the room, narrowed her sparkling cerulean eyes, her long and shiny blonde hair glittering in the light as she opened her mouth to speak. "But it is only valid if you present some us with some viable evidence because as of yet, your Lord has, as the muggles would say, not shown us the money. Personally, I find it ironic that Lord Voldemort is suddenly caring about the sacredness of human life when in France, there is still an arrest warrant regarding the massacre of an entire muggle farming ranch."

The British Ambassador swung his head around; his furious gaze boring into the French Ambassador's determined eyes, the slight yet resolute woman not budging an inch as she smiled mockingly back at him.

"Ah, Ms Gabrielle Delacour," He said, a barely veiled tone of hatred in his voice. "Is it not true that your own sister once served in the Order of Phoenix before her untimely demise? That you yourself were once saved by Harry Potter himself?"

Gabrielle made an undignified scoffing noise as she batted away the underlying connotations with the question. "That is ancient and irrelevant knowledge," She said dismissively.

"Perhaps," the British Ambassador said softly, a tiny and arrogant smile curving his lips. "But as each hour passes, our investigation teams find more and more evidence within the ruins of Azkaban. Some of it has been...startling, to say the least, for it suggests that the Order has links with several prominent and international names. Some of these names, however, do not cause much astonishment."

"Ah, and this would be in your fabled and mythological evidence," Gabrielle murmured, a smile playing on her lips. "I suggest, Mr Ambassador, that you examine your evidence closely, for it seems to contain some truly fantastic information. Who knows? You may even find the location of the lost city of Atlantis!"

There was a tinkling of laughs around the assembly as the British Ambassador stared stonily at his French rival, refusing to be baited. One of the Supreme Mugwumps flicked his wand and created another noisy crack, silencing the assembly instantly.

"Mrs French Ambassador, kindly remember that you are an adult and as such, started behaving like one. Mr British Ambassador, if you have any evidence that supports these allegations then please produce it now." The Supreme Mugwump mumbled softly, his ancient voice a whisper for most of the assembly.

The British Ambassador nodded, watching with cold eyes as Gabrielle leant back into her seat, before he flicked his wand. The levitating scroll of casualties dropped to the podium as another rose to take its place. With a deft movement, the Ambassador banished the scroll to the Head Supreme Mugwump, who caught it with speed far beyond his age and unravelled it quickly.

"I present to the assembly the architectural plans for Azkaban Island," The British Ambassador informed the assembly with a cold smile. "When Australia was still a British colony, its sole function was to house our most dangerous criminals, mass-murderers and as such. Bluntly, it was nothing more than a penal colony."

"A tool of Lord Voldemort speaking of mass murderers? How ironic," Gabrielle muttered in a low voice that was barely heard by the assembly and completely missed by the Supreme Mugwumps. The British Ambassador faltered, his gaze turning murderous as he spun his gaze to Gabrielle's and continued on, his narrowed eyes never leaving hers.

"So that we could house our dangerous magical criminals safely, a new prison facility was built and named 'New Azkaban'; a prison which I believe still resides in Australia today. The prisoners that we wished to transfer from England were, naturally, too dangerous to transport by ship and at the time, International Portkeys were still in the earlier stages of development but eventually we found an effective solution to our problems. Deep within Azkaban and New Azkaban, we constructed an alternate means of transportation- one that has lost its fashion and usefulness in these times. We..."

"Are very interested in your history lesson, Mr Ambassador," Gabrielle interjected loudly, a superior smile stretching over her face. "But don't we have more important issues than the construction and use of the now-destroyed prison complex of Azkaban?"

"Mrs French Ambassador," One of the Supreme Mugwumps broke sternly, the ancient wizard looking faintly annoyed. "Must you do this in every assembly we hold?"

"My apologies, Supreme Mugwump," Gabrielle said humbly and bowed her head. However the British Ambassador could see the malevolent smile hidden beneath the sheet of her hair and almost lost his restraint as he regarded her with a look bordering on hatred before he turned back to the assembly, trying desperately to pick up where he had left off.

"As I was saying," The British Ambassador continued in an edgy tone. "We constructed portals that, when activated, allowed Azkaban to send the prisoners to New Azkaban almost instantaneously. During our raid on Azkaban, our Aurors witnessed the Order of Phoenix fleeing into the portal, escaping from Azkaban and entering New Azkaban, Australia!"

"That is a lie!" The Australian Ambassador boomed angrily, his loud voice echoing in the large chamber and overlapping the quiet mutters of the other Ambassadors. "We are not housing the Order of Phoenix within our borders and New Azkaban has been abandoned for a hundred years!"

"You, Mr Ambassador, are the one who is lying! Yesterday, we know that a representative of your Parliament visited New Azkaban and met with Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix! Do not tell this assembly that you have no knowledge of the Order of Phoenix! We are not fools!" The British Ambassador retaliated loudly.

"How would you know that?" The Australian Ambassador scoffed but his face had paled slightly, his eyes glittering with an unidentified emotion.

"We have our ways," said the British Ambassador with a touch of smugness in his voice.

"Spies!" murmured Gabrielle, her eyes narrowing as she leaned forward on his table. "You admit freely that you committed an act of espionage?"

"Please," The British Ambassador scoffed, waving away the accusation without a second thought. "You don't have the right to criticise us when it is your government that has been regularly employing our top-level Ministry employees for your spy network. Yes, we know all about them, including Draco Malfoy, the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, who strangely disappeared a couple of days ago after sending *you* the news of our impending invasion on Azkaban."

Gabrielle blinked in surprise at this revelation and quickly jumped for the opportunity presented to her. "Are you telling us that the mighty Lord Voldemort

has *misplaced* one of his senior Heads? Dear me, this is startling news indeed, especially when it concerns such a prominent position and a prominent man. Dear me, I hope that for his sake, Lord Voldemort keeps his wand close. After all, there might be a war and in his forgetful state, he may leave it behind!"

A rumble of chuckles and laughter drifted through the Assembly as the British Ambassador continued smiling coldly. Just as one of the Supreme Mugwumps was about flick his wand, the British Ambassador spoke up, his face suddenly triumphant.

"As amusing as that little joke was, I couldn't help but notice that you did not deny it," He said softly, forcing the rest of the assembly to settle down so that they could hear his words.

Gabrielle opened her mouth, her eyes suddenly narrowing and her face hardening, but the British Ambassador waved her off dismissively, turning his back to her, facing the other half of the assembly and raising his voice.

"I have shown this assembly evidence that the Order of Phoenix inside Australian territory. I have shown this assembly evidence that the Australian Parliament knows this fact and have not taken action. I will show you more evidence that links Australian-made wands to the wands carried by the Order of Phoenix. I will show this assembly transactions made by Australia to accounts that we have recently learnt belong to high-profile members of the Order of Phoenix. Therefore, with this information, surely you can see how we have come to believe that Australia is deliberately shielding and aiding the Order of Phoenix against us!"

The Australian Ambassador seemed to have nothing to say and just stared at his British counterpart with a carefully constructed look of neutrality on his face. Meanwhile, the American Ambassador shifted in his seat as he spoke up.

"Although this evidence is certainly...damning, surely Lord Voldemort does not want to enter another conflict when he has finally achieved peace? Surely there are sanctions or embargoes that would appease him? You yourself have presented us with lists of casualties from the past twenty years. If you enter another conflict, it may very well strain your already depleted forces."

"Nonsense!" the Bulgarian Ambassador roared from his desk, slamming his meaty fists onto the table. "We have continued to maintain a very close relationship with Britain since Lord Voldemort took ascended to his rightful position. If Lord Voldemort is determined on war, then based on what I have heard here today, my report to the Bulgarian Minister of Magic will include a recommendation for full military and logistic support for our British allies and friends."



"More support?" Gabrielle asked with mock-surprise. "Why, Mr Bulgarian Ambassador, if your support of Lord Voldemort and Britain increases, you're going to need to change the colours of your flag!"

The Bulgarian Ambassador completely ignored her comment and the tinkling laughs that followed it as he respectfully bowed his head to the British Ambassador, who returned it proudly, a glimmer of appreciation and satisfaction on his face.

"I will have to agree with the Bulgarian Ambassador," the Italian Ambassador said, his dark hair and tanned skin contrasting against his gleaming white teeth as he smiled at the British Ambassador. "What we are hearing today is certainly justification for a military response. Britain has been betrayed and they deserve retribution."

"But does that retribution necessarily have involve violence?" the Swedish Ambassador said, a long blonde haired man seating comfortably back in his seat. "The hatred that exists between Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort is legendary. It seems to me that Voldemort is letting his personal feelings conflict his judgement."

"Perhaps," the British Ambassador replied slowly, taking the Swedish Ambassador by surprise. "However, would you not feel angered and betrayed if you discovered that a number of countries that you considered allies- friends, even, and not just Australia, were sponsoring and supporting the one organisation that is set on your downfall, on your death? I stand in a room of wizards- and a witch, claiming to be representing their nations with honesty and integrity yet I know that several of them have betrayed Britain through underhanded tactics and deception. Oh yes, the evidence we are collecting from Azkaban is damning indeed!"

Here he let his eyes flicker over the Gabrielle, almost unnoticeably, but she slightly stiffened in her seat and sat up straight, her shoulders back and a stubborn and determined look on her face as she eyed him wordlessly, hidden contempt in her eyes.

"Tell this assembly how your Ministry would react to such a shocking discovery?" the British Ambassador asked, his eyes reverting back to the Swedish Ambassador. "Would they meekly crawl to the International Confederation of Wizards and sob out their story, hoping that someone may take pity on you?"

The Swedish Ambassador slowly shook his head, his face thoughtful.

"However, this assembly may have imparted some wisdom today. I will take recommendations back to Lord Voldemort concerning the diplomatic solutions to this transgression. But he is a man who has been wounded by those he trusted

and he has been hurt deeply by what has been discovered. But unless these sanctions are able to appease him, he may not have any choice but to continue to push for a military response.”

The Swedish Ambassador nodded slowly, digesting the words carefully, while one of the Supreme Mugwumps flicked his wand forcefully, letting out a loud crack in a faint shower of silver sparks, gathering the attention of the assembly as they gazed unblinkingly at the British Ambassador with blank faces.

“Mr British Ambassador,” said the ancient wizard softly. “What would your Lord consider as acceptable sanctions for Australia’s possible transgression?”

“Firstly, Harry Potter,” answered the British Ambassador firmly. “If the Australian Parliament of Magical Society can produce Harry Potter to us dead or alive, it would make us look favourably on any possible diplomatic solutions and it may appease Lord Voldemort’s desire for revenge.”

“Let’s say that Australia did somehow discover that Harry Potter managed to sneak into their borders and captured him,” Gabrielle asked slowly, toying with a lock of her hair as she regarded the British Ambassador carefully. “What would become of him if he was handed into your custody?”

“He would receive a speedy and fair trial, of course, as such is the basis of our legal system,” The British Ambassador replied with what seemed like a touch of surprise. “Should he be found innocent of all charges, unlikely as it may be, he would be released back into the community. Should he be found guilty, his fate would have to be debated amongst the community and the Ministry. More than likely, it would be death.”

“Forgive me if I don’t feel reassured,” Gabrielle said, a mischievous smile curling her lips. “But in England, renowned criminals tend to find themselves placed in positions of power amongst your Ministry. Say, perhaps Harry Potter could replace your lost Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement!”

There was another round of laughter as one of the Supreme Mugwumps let loose with another loud crack from his wand, his face stern as he regarded Gabrielle, who suddenly looked very meek and contrite. The Supreme Mugwump looked like he was about to reprimand her when he sighed, as if he had given up on that point

“The Assembly will be allowed a three hour recess in order to contact their represented governments,” He said instead. “In this time, certain ambassadors should take the chance to calm themselves down and start remembering who they are and what they are doing here. Use this time wisely, ladies gentlemen, much is at stake here and a war is not in everybody’s best interests.”

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At the same time, on the other side of the world, Harry was attaching a small scroll bound by a black ribbon to the leg of an important and official Ministry owl. Behind him, five dozen men and women were lining up in formation, their faces determined and grim. Ron walked among them, talking to them softly as he reassured and confirmed their orders, his eyes set with a certain resignation. Harry's own raiding team was clustered around him and he turned to face them as he placed the owl on his shoulder, ignoring its small and huffy hoots of annoyance.

"You do understand what you have to do?" he asked for the third time. "I won't be with you in this."

Jordan rolled her eyes, her beautiful face showing her exasperation. "Yes," she said impatiently. "We'll be very subtle about it, like you said."

"That's the key," Harry said, nodding his head in agreement and ignoring her impatience.

"We'll be there," Robert muttered gruffly, limping as he paced back and forth. He rubbed his greying auburn beard as he reached the end of his pacing and swung around again, his limp becoming more and more pronounced as he continued moving. Knowing that this was a standard exercise for the ex-Auror to warm up his bad leg, Harry ignored his apparent nervousness.

"How is Davis coming along?" Harry asked and knew his answer instantly as a flicker of pain washed off Bowden's face, while Jordan dropped her eyes to the ground and Robert paused in his pacing for a split-second. "I see."

"Apparently, it was painless," Jordan said softly. "The dark magic in his injuries finally overwhelmed him. The Healers couldn't do anything except give him a dreamless sleep potion and let him pass away."

Harry felt the first stirrings of sorrow and the all-too-familiar aching in his heart but clamped down on them ruthlessly. Right now, there was no time for regrets or grief and if Harry wanted to win this war, he knew he had to have a clear head. Instead, he mentally reviewed his objectives today and allowed a glimmer of a cold smile curve his lips. He had been waiting to do this for twenty-three years.

"Are we all ready?" He called out loudly, leaving his group and striding quickly towards Ron, who nodded quickly. "Alright. You've all been given International Portkeys to your targets. Thanks to some newly acquired information, we'll be popping straight through their wards. Diagon and Hogsmeade teams, make loud noises and lots of flashy colours. We only want to scare these people. Those attacking warehouses or safehouses should use a degree of caution. They won't be expecting it but surprise only goes so far. I know most of you aren't used to

this sort of thing but move quickly, attempt to achieve your goals and leave for your next target when the first sign of trouble appears.”

He stopped speaking as he reached one of the teams, four grim faced men and women holding a long rope. He placed his hand on the rope and turned back to the rest of the Azkaban Guard.

“Good luck,” He said as he felt the International Portkey activate and his vision disappeared in a whirlwind of flashing bright colours.

Harry reappeared behind the Shrieking Shack in Hogsmeade, flopping clumsily to the ground as he was thrown from the vortex of the powerful portkey. He was immediately on his feet, his dazed eyes furiously sweeping across his surroundings while the owl on his shoulder hooted angrily, ruffling its feathers. Harry gave it a nudge and it flew off as fast as it could, eager to leave Harry’s presence. Harry gave a smile of amusement while around him; four of the Azkaban Guard struggled to clamour to their feet, shaking their heads in a futile attempt throw away the temporary dizziness and pounding sensations in their skull. Harry turned his attention of the small Wizarding village bellow him. After Voldemort had taken over the Ministry, Hogsmeade had lost the title of the only completely magical village in Britain, but it was still a popular destination for wizards and witches and even on an early Sunday morning, clusters of people walked happily through the streets.

“Are you ready?” Harry asked the leader of the team, a ragged blonde-haired witch by the name of Elaine.

“Yes sir,” Elaine replied and with quick nod of respect, trotted down the grassy hill, away from the shrieking shack and towards Hogsmeade. Meanwhile, Harry turned around and headed inside the supposedly haunted building, opening the rotting door with a wave of his wand. A musty smell greeted his nose as the door swung back, revealing a dark and beaten up room that had not changed since the last time Harry had been there. He walked inside and ignoring the torn-up furniture and gnawed pieces of wood determinedly, he located the stairway and went down.

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As Harry was entering the secret tunnel that led to the Whomping Willow, Elaine had stealthily moved the other three Azkaban Guards down towards Hogsmeade with a mixture of disillusionment charms and localised and modified silencing charms. Now, they stood behind a large wooden building- the Three Broomsticks and waited as Elaine peered down the street, noting the small group of chatting and laughing Aurors sitting outside. Two of them were holding bottles of Firewhiskey and they all seemed to be relaxed and at ease. She suppressed a grin as she pulled her head back and turned to her team.

"Alright, we haven't done this before but we've practised for it," She said softly. "There are five Aurors sitting down at one of the tables and I can't see any others. We'll take them out first, fast and hard. Afterwards, we just make a ruckus. Make a lot of noise, use a lot of flashy spells and just cause trouble."

"What if the civilians try to attack us?" One of the Guards asked, his face scrunched up in concern.

"Stun 'em and leave 'em," Elaine said flatly. "If you come across any bravery, incapacitate using non-lethal spells. We're not the murderers the Ministry says we are, let's not act like it." The man nodded resolutely as Elaine took a deep breath, gathering her shaky nerves, and exhaled loudly, trying to force the nervousness and fear from her body as she tightly gripped her wand and steeled herself.

"Let's go!" She said and without a second thought, ducked from behind the building and out into the open street. With her disillusionment charms still in place, she was able to push and shove her way through the confused crowds and reach the Aurors in only a few seconds, her wand up and levelled at the oblivious blue-robed men, who continued talking and laughing loudly as they celebrated what they thought was the end of the Order of Phoenix.

"Is everybody here?" She said softly and received a series of confirmative answers. "Attack...now!"

One of the Aurors suddenly looked up as he heard the last sentence, his hand flying to his wand as his eyes scanned for the person who had said it. He had just seen a curious glimmer in the corner of his eye when a streak of glowing red light suddenly slammed into him, hurling him off his seat with great force. The chair shattered underneath the powerful spell while the Auror slammed into the Three Broomsticks door, crashing through it with a painful crack.

The other Aurors tried to jump to their feet, their wands appearing in their hands a second too late as a barrage of multi-coloured spells and curses burst from all around them. One Auror slumped to the ground with a dull thump as he was slapped aside by a powerful force, his head cracking on the edge of the table as he fell and splitting open his head. Another screamed loudly in pain as a streak of cackling blue and white magic enveloped his arm, seeping past the skin and loudly cracking the bones. He took a staggered step backwards, just in time for his chair to suddenly shoot up towards him and smash him in the face, sending his unconscious body to the ground. As the last two Aurors tried in vain to defend themselves, their table suddenly exploded in a roaring ball of flames. Searing heat slammed into the Aurors and one screamed in pain as he was struck in the face with the full-blast of it, never seeing the flash of red light that sent him tumbling to the ground. The last Auror managed to deflect the searing wave of heat with a shimmering globe of silvery magic but fell to a deathly coil of green

light, accompanied by a roaring wind that slammed through his shield and struck him in the chest. His eyes widened with shock and horror as life escaped him and he collapsed as the first screams of panic and terror emerged.

“Send up the mark!” Elaine hissed as she quickly strode back onto the street, eyeing the fleeing wizards and witches as panic spread around the town. She didn’t hear the incantation but the screams only intensified as a fiery phoenix shimmered and sprung up in the air above the Three Broomsticks, radiating with beautiful hues of crimson and gold.

Elaine ignored the beautiful yet terrifying mark and instead raised her wand, pointing it above her head as she muttered the incantation to the Howling Banshee charm. Immediately, a mournful and horrible shriek filled the air, piercing through wood and stone as it swept through the town. Fleeing wizards and witches clapped their hands over their ears as the sound drove into their skulls, raising the hairs on the back of their neck. Those who were smart enough cast deafening charms on themselves or conjured shields of brightly coloured and glowing magic, which rippled as it deflected the invisible sound waves away. Elaine lowered her wand and quickly summoned one of the now-abandoned tables from the porch outside the Three Broomsticks. As it zoomed from the ground and towards her, Elaine levelled her wand at it and as the Howling Banshee charm quickly faded away, muttered the most powerful and noisy Explosion Curse she knew. A flash of dark purple light rocketed from the tip of her wand and struck the moving chair, which exploded in a deafening roar of fire and debris. The windowpanes on nearby houses shuddered madly while the ground slightly rumbled. As another wave of hysteria went through the fleeing wizards and witches, Elaine spared a quick glance at the castle and hoped that everything was going well on that end.

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Harry carefully walked down the damp and dark tunnel, his eyes barely open as he extended all of his senses into searching for the wards. Water dripped from the ceiling, slapping on the ground over and over again as a fistful of silvery flames in Harry’s palm flickered softly in the darkness. Suddenly Harry halted just metres away from where he knew the entrance from the Whomping Willow lay. Something immensely powerful and oily had drifted into his senses and Harry narrowed his eyes, waving his wand quickly and letting the barest amount of magic seep through. A grey, cloudy smoke seeped from the tip of his wand and into the tunnel ahead. As it passed through, a multilayered lattice of glowing coloured threads lit up in a dim glow. Green, purple and black magic stood out amongst the rest as the dark magic pulsed eerily over the natural wards of Hogwarts.

“And these must be Snape’s wards,” Harry muttered to himself, glancing at the impressive configuration. With slow and careful movements, Harry tapped himself with his wand and closed his eyes, muttering a long Latin incantation as

he focussed on the effects of the spell. The information garnered from his spy had included a list of magical signatures that were permitted to step through the Hogwarts wards. At the moment, Harry was flicking his wand as glowing white light pulsed from the tip, swirling around him in a lazy spiral motion, creating an exact replica of one of these magical signatures and placing it over his own. Without the spy's research into this exact magical signature, such a feat would have been deemed impossible and Harry felt a flood of affection and pride fill him as his mind drifted to his loyal spy. As the light pulsed into him and faded, Harry shook himself from his thoughts and without hesitation, stepped forward and into the wards. A tingle ran over him as he entered the glowing lattice but nothing else happened and Harry smiled coldly as he quickly moved forward, one goal in mind. Severus Snape was to die today.

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Ron, Kingsley and Melanie, the last members of their raiding teams, appeared in a crumpled heap in the bottom of a very smelly and damp cellar. Instantly, their wands were out and trained in front of them as they staggered up, shaking off the affects of the International Portkey and observing their surroundings. The cellar, which Ron remembered as being distinctly full, had been emptied and recently cleaned. A stack of boxes had been dumped in the corner, filled to the brim with dirty and faded books, while a pile of ripped and blood-smeared robes lay on a small table. Ron glanced at Kingsley for confirmation and received a short nod in return. He motioned to a small staircase and silently moved towards it, flicking his wand and casting a localised Silencing charm on the stairs as he ascended.

"This is the place, then?" Melanie asked softly, her frail form rigid with hatred as loathing washed over her features.

"Yes," Ron whispered as Kingsley tapped the closed door in front of them with his wand. "This is Number 12 Grimmauld Place."

"Good," Melanie whispered with dark anticipation and Kingsley opened the door quietly, his scry having come up negative. "Let's go and pay Bellatrix Lestrange a little visit."

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In a small building in the middle of London, Jordan flicked her lustrous black hair impatiently and emitted another sigh as she casually stepped over the body of an injured and unconscious Auror, making sure to avoid the puddle of gleaming blood. Six other Aurors lay unconscious or dead nearby and the walls, which had been painted a bland white, were littered with holes, cracks and scorch marks. Next to Jordan, Bowden shot her an annoyed look and turned back to the massive filing cabinet in front of her, watching as Robert broke through the sturdy protection charms and wards with ease, making use of the newly gathered information from Harry's spy to aid him. The filing cabinet nearest to them suddenly sprung open and Jordan rolled her eyes.

"It's about time," She grumbled. "We have three other targets, you know."

"Would you be quiet?" Bowden whispered furiously, a glimmer of annoyance appearing in the old woman's eyes. "Just hurry up and do what you were ordered to do."

"I'm going to," Jordan shot back, her teeth clenching in annoyance, and turned to the filing cabinet, flicking through the files as she searched for her target. Next to her, Robert gave a noise of satisfaction as he pulled out a folder. He opened it up and gathered the four pieces of parchment, waving his wand broadly over them and making copies without any hesitation

"There, the first decoy's done," he said triumphantly.

"I'm doing the second," Bowden muttered, her hidden by a levitating stack of parchment as she subtly flicked her wand over it, delicately copying the parchment while attempting to hide her tampering.

Jordan went back to the filing cabinet, flicking through a dozen more folders, and her green eyes lit up as she levitated a bulging folder out of the cabinet and used her wand to flick through it.

"And here it is," She said with satisfaction. "Hogwarts in all of its glory. We have...maximum population, magical detection charms and...aha! The ward scheme!"

"You know what to do," Bowden said crossly and went back to her own task.

"Oh, yes I do," muttered Jordan softly to herself and got to work.



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Severus Snape, unlike Harry Potter, had changed very little over the years. His long, dark hair remained ever lank and greasy and his face still bore his distinctive look of distaste and scorn. His hair had started to sprout some grey and there were some wrinkles appearing at the corner of his eyes but unlike Harry Potter, his life had been rather stress-free and enjoyable since the fateful night in 1997 when he had finally chosen his true loyalties by murdering Albus Dumbledore. Even though he had been under an Unbreakable Oath to assist Draco Malfoy in his mission, Snape had seen an opportunity to promote himself further in the Dark Lord's ranks and into an easy and pleasure-filled life and he had grasped it firmly. Twenty-five years later, he could quite honestly say that he had no regrets, save for one- that he had not killed Harry Potter that night. After the murder of Albus Dumbledore, Severus Snape had continued to serve his Lord, concocting useful potions and participating in raids against Ministry strongholds and Auror forces. He had been present in the Fall of the Ministry and had, in fact, killed Minerva McGonagall, the Head of the Order of Phoenix at that time. Afterwards, Snape had been given the very prestigious and time-honoured position as the new Headmaster at Hogwarts School of the Dark Arts and was able to finally teach the brats in ways that *he* thought were appropriate. Needless to say, had Argus Filch still been alive, he would have been very pleased with the standard of discipline that was currently enforced at Hogwarts.

At the moment, Severus was sitting in the Headmasters office, eying a new proposal that had been sent by the Ministry. Due to the current tensions between Britain and other Wizarding communities, the Ministry believed that the Sixth and Seventh Years should be attending a Ministry-run Combat Training class for five hours every Saturday. As he was reading over the proposed spells that would be taught, a small tingle went through the back of his head and he looked up sharply as the wards alerted him that somebody had opened the gargoyle statue protecting his office. After the last diaster, when Snape had lost a very precious and priceless artefact of his Lord's, he was taking no chances.

"Enter!" He snapped angrily at the closed door, his hand sliding to his wand and gripping the length of wood firmly, a dark curse itching to be let loose on the intruder.

The door opened and the Head Girl, a crimson-haired girl with sharp blue eyes, entered, followed closely by the Head Boy, a pale skinned and dark-haired boy with aristocratic features and a sharp chin.

"What is it?" Severus snapped impatiently, his irritation growing at the unexpected intrusion. "If this is not vitally important, then you can expect to be given the strap! I am very busy!"

"Headmaster, Sir," The Head Boy said hesitantly, his mask of control cracking with fear. "The Order of Phoenix, their mark, Sir, it's over Hogsmeade!"

Severus felt his blood run cold at the thought of an Order raid so close to his Hogwarts and he shot from his seat, his wand in hand and his cloak billowing behind him as he exited the Headmaster's office. He strode quickly down the staircase, the Head Boy and Girl following him, and out into the hallway to the nearest window, which happened to be facing in Hogsmeade direction. Sure enough, a blazing and fiery phoenix stood out amongst the sky, glaring down at Hogsmeade with a sense of righteousness and nobility that Severus hated. Severus let out a hiss of anger as his mind worked furiously, his dark eyes narrowing in speculation.

"Send all students back to their common rooms and prepare for Aurors to arrive," He snapped out quickly. "I want Prefect Patrols on all corridors and if anything appears out of the ordinary, then you will find the nearest Professor and..." He trailed off as anger shot through his veins. The Head Boy and Head Girl weren't even looking at him! Instead, the attention of their focus seemed to be behind him and their normally composed and arrogant faces were pale with fear.

"Hello *Snivellius*," said a familiar voice from behind him, although it was a little deeper than he remembered.

"Potter!" Severus whispered back with a tinge of dread, a rarely felt emotion of fear and dismay flooding through his veins. He whipped around, his wand flying out in front of him, and saw Potter leaning against the wall next to the gargoyle statue, his poise arrogant and his face twisted into a self-satisfied smirk.

"Do you still make potions, Snape?" Potter asked in a deceptively light tone, not appearing to be the least bit concerned with the three wands that were aimed at him, although two of these wands were held with shaky hands as the Head Boy and Head Girl appeared to be freeze with fear, their eyes wide and their mouths dry.

"Not usually," Severus answered back coldly, watching Potter with wary eyes. Despite the ineptitude that Potter had shown in his Hogwarts years, Snape knew that he was a very dangerous wizard. The wicked-looking scar on the Dark Lord's head after his battle with Potter at Azkaban only proved the point.

"Remarkable," Potter said with a tone of wonderment that quickly turned into a lazy and smug smile. "Your hair still remains as slimy as ever. I think Ron owes me a galleon, because I always thought that the gunk in your hair was natural."

Severus could feel the familiar stirrings of hatred emerge from the bottom of his stomach that usually appeared whenever a Potter showed their ugly face. His gripped his wand tighter as he regarded the wizard in front of him, reluctant to make the first move until he was sure that it was absolutely necessary.

Potter, however, switched his gaze from Severus to the Head Boy and Head Girl standing behind him and his voice softened. "I think that you two should leave. Headmaster Snape and I have some old business to discuss."

The two seventh-year students took a single fearful glance at Severus, before they both turned away and bolted down the corridor, away from Potter. Potter watched them leave out of the corner of his eye, although his attention remained focussed on Severus, who was suddenly feeling a little more anxious now that the students were gone. The various scenarios he had been whipping up in his mind, mainly concerning using the students as shields, were suddenly worthless as Potter smiled dangerously at him.

"Now, where were we?"

"*Avada Kedavra!*" Severus suddenly bellowed, his wand flicking furiously, and a jet of the deadly green light of the Killing Curse rocketed from the tip of his wand. Potter instantly pushed himself off the wall, allowing the curse to fly past him, and his own wand flew into his hand as his green eyes hardened behind his spectacles and a dark look of amusement washed over his face.

"*Expelliarmus!*" Potter said loudly, his face radiating his smugness and enjoyment. The shimmering red bolt of magic that flew from his wand was easily deflected by Severus, who responded with a burst of brightly glowing balls of yellow magic, which cackled and sparkled as they zoomed towards Potter.

Potter responded with a quick sweep of his wand and an intense flash of bright magic that pulsed through the corridor and the sparkling balls of magic suddenly exploded in a shower of sickly flames and dark power as the spell was intercepted and negated. Severus continued his furious assault, dark magic weaving its way through his wand as he conjured a blazing sphere of flickering purple and black flames, launching it towards Harry along with a glimmering bluish-white cone of magic.

Potter reacted quickly to the new assault, bringing his wand to bear on Severus. "*Petrificus Totalus! Stupefy! Expelliarmus!*" He all but bellowed, while taking a step back and sending a wordless blast of roaring white light at the incoming spells. The white beam of magic engulfed the ball of flames completely and struck the blue-white cone of magic, exploding in a rumbling wave of cascading sparks and bright light.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" Severus hissed with fury as he wordlessly and effortlessly swatted away the schoolyard jinxes Potter had cast, jabbing his wand fiercely at the green-eye wizard. Potter just sidestepped with a lazy smile on his face, his response consisting of a leg-locker jinx and two stunning charms. Severus didn't even bother to deflect them and merely brought forward a *protego* shielding

charm, a thin layer of sparkling silver magic surrounding him for an instant and absorbing the jinxes.

"You mock me!" Severus hissed angrily, the rage inside him growing and growing despite his half-hearted attempts to quell it. "You have obviously come here to kill me yet you ridicule this with schoolyard jinxes and weak little spells!"

"The thing is, Snivellius" Potter said, an arrogant jeering sneer appearing on his face as he answered. "I frankly don't believe that you're worth any more effort. But, if you find this insulting, let's move onto a few more spells that you're, ah, personally familiar with."

Severus noted the familiar wand movements as Potter wordlessly cast a *leviocorpus*, his Legillimency unable to pierce the powerful Occlumency of his opponent, and with a sudden flush of rage that overrode any reservations of fear or dread he may have had, he parried the spell almost instantly, his eyes cold with fury. Potter's next spell was one that Severus had designed to rapidly grow toe-nails and his anger soared as he batted it away. A *langlock*, another of the Half-Blood Prince's inventions, was next, followed by a conjured flock of small, fluttery birds that flapped madly towards Severus. Severus was able to dodge or deflect his own spells with ease, but his retaliatory *Avada Kedavra* curse was swallowed up by the flock of birds as they tweeted and flew towards him. Several of them fell to the ground the instant the jet of deadly green light glanced them, but the rest continued on until a powerful invisible force suddenly took hold of them and hurled them away as Severus flicked his wand roughly.

"Oh, what's the matter?" asked Potter in a jeering and mocking tone. "Is Snivellius having a bad day? Should the big, bad Potter go away and leave the coward to his thoughts?"

Severus almost froze as his anger reached an all-time high. His mind flashed with the images of his time as a spy, his exhaustion, his tireless efforts to appease both sides and the constant torture and scrutiny of his Lord at the time and his face flushed with rage, his bottom lip quivering madly. The next spell from his wand literally buckled his arm as a cascading blast of powerful magic burst forward. Potter was instantly on the move as he conjured a glowing and watery-like circular shield on his left-arm and deflected the spell with a strong wave of his arm, the blast of light slamming into his shield and reflecting outwards, striking a nearby suit of armour. The suit of armour suddenly burst into a thousand shards of tiny pieces of metal as Severus took a step forward, an oily and foul streak of brown magic lancing towards Potter as he jabbed his wand forward. Potter deflected this with his arm-shield as well, reflecting it back towards Severus, who ducked as the sickly curse zoomed over his head. It struck a section of the ground and the stone suddenly blackened, cracking and splitting as if it were rotting away by some unnatural means.

Potter responded with, at first, a blast of blue magic, and then followed almost instantaneously with a radiant pale tendril of magic. Both spells zapped towards Severus, who conjured a brilliant dome of glowing bronze magic, which enveloped his form. The blast of blue light slammed into the shield and exploded in a small shower of blue and bronze sparks but as the white tendril struck the shield, it seeped into the magic. Severus felt his eyes widen as he stared with surprise as white tendrils shot around his shield, barely contained by the power of his magic. He jerked back in alarm and let his eyes flicker towards Potter, who was watching with a small smile of satisfaction as he waited for his spell to finish.

Severus turned his attention back to the unknown spell as he slithered over and around the glowing bronze dome of magic that surrounded him. With a mental command, the fading shield suddenly roared back to life with vigour as more magic was poured into it, until it seemed as if there was a thick bronze coloured glass wall in front of him. The white tendrils, however, took no notice as they burrowed their way through and suddenly, four of the tendrils wormed their way through the shield and shot towards Severus. Severus waited for the pain he was sure to come and braced himself, but the four tendrils suddenly stopped and expanded into a line of barbs, much like a fishing hook, which suddenly shot backwards towards the shield. Although the tendrils retreated through the small hole in the shield, the barbs did not and Severus, who was still channelling his magic into his shield, suddenly gave a cry of pain as the shield was pulled apart by the enormous power of the spell. His wand flew from his hand and to the ground as the shield exploded in a wave of bronze shards of magic, which quickly dissipated as the integrity of the shield was lost. Severus quickly stretched out his hand and with a wandless and wordless summoning charm, the wand started to zoom back to his hand.

*“Sectumsempra!”*

A thin arc of flashing silvery light suddenly slashed the flying wand in two before Severus' horrified eyes. He turned them to Potter, who was advancing towards him, his smugness and arrogance gone and replaced with a look of chilling anger. Wordlessly, Potter slashed his wand, a wordless *Sectumsempra* slashing at Severus' arm. Instantly, the silvery flash gouged a straight line through the robes and flesh in a spray of blood. Severus gritted his teeth with pain as Potter slashed his wand again, the *Sectumsempra* ripping through the skin on his chest with another spray of blood. Severus clutched his good arm against the wound as Potter raised his wand again, and with a final slash, Severus collapsed to the cold ground as the third *Sectumsempra* ripped into his legs, severing veins, arteries and muscles. As Severus looked up, his mind already woozy from the loss of blood, he saw Potter looming above him.

“Are you going to murder me now, Potter?” He asked in a slightly slurred voice in a last ditch effort to save his life. “In cold-blood, as I bleed here before you?”

"Yes," Potter said simply, his face hard but his voice calm and without hatred. Severus felt a spike of fear run through him as Potter levelled his wand at him for the last time and desperately tried to move, to call for help, to do anything, but his muscles wouldn't respond and his throat had closed up in a blinding instant of terror as he stared into the eyes of his executioner, who jabbed the wand at him without another word.

Severus felt rather than saw the flash of silver light that ripped through his chest as blinding white flared before his eyes, before it suddenly and rapidly darkened. The last thing he heard and saw before he died was Potter's last words as he conjured words of flame above him with a look of grim determination on his face, reading them aloud as he created them.

"Here lies Severus Snape, traitor, coward, who ironically fell to his own spell."

And then he knew no more as the darkness enveloped his mind completely.

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Harry surveyed his handiwork with a grim expression on his face, taking care to avoid the ever-growing pool of blood that was spreading from the mangled form of Severus Snape. He had felt a certain amount of satisfaction and dark pleasure from killing Snape, but now, afterwards, only a lingering sense of hatred remained as his mind dismissed the former Potions Professor and started thinking about the next stages of the raid. He closed his eyes, extending his senses to feel the dark magic that literally had been coated onto the wards of Hogwarts. When he found what he was looking for, he opened them with a small pleased smile of satisfaction. Many of the wards had been Snape's work and with his death, even after a few seconds, they were slipping away.

Harry approached the Gargoyle, which remained open, and extended his senses to the stairwell. The curses and charms that Snape had placed were, like the Dark Magic that had been coated over the wards, fading rapidly. Still, it would take several hours, maybe days, until they completely dispersed and he frowned slightly, taking a step backwards and glancing down at the bloodied body by his feet.

"I hope you kept that office comfortable for me," He said, his voice a jeer as he glanced coldly at Snape's corpse. Giving it a hard kick in the ribs, Harry spun around with a swirl of his cloak and hastily strode away, completely ignoring the seventh year student by the suit of armour he had spotted from the corner of his eye. The student, a blonde-haired boy, was too busy trying to hide himself to notice the small smile that appeared on Harry's face as he left.

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In Hogsmeade, Elaine ducked a deadly jet of green light and sprung up again, her wand flicking madly as she bellowed a powerful incantation. An Auror gave a

gurgled scream as a bolt of sizzling yellow magic struck him on the chest and blasted him backwards, his body crumpling to the ground and twitching madly. Nearby, her team slowly retreated away from Hogsmeade as the reinforcement Aurors arrived in droves. There were already twelve of them, and more were continually apparating in as time went on.

"Everybody, remember what we were told!" Elaine yelled loudly, her voice drifting over the sounds of battle as her three team-mates fought close by. She turned her attention back to the advancing Aurors, ducking behind a large tree as a streak of bright magic bolted towards her, missing her by centimetres. She swung out from behind the tree a second later and with a flash of light, one of the Auror's suddenly gave a strangled yell as long, iron chain suddenly wrapped itself around him, squeezing the air from his lungs as he collapsed to the ground.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" Elaine heard somebody yell and a scream of panic from one of her team-mates suddenly faltered. Dread weighed down her stomach and she knew without a doubt that the man was dead. Her face twisted up in anger and her next curse was jet of blood-red light, which cracked past a hastily constructed shield charm and struck an Auror, seeping into his skin. The Auror gave a twisted yell of agony as steam started emanating from his form, his body stumbling and shuddering madly as his blood began to boil. He collapsed to the ground underneath a Stunning Charm by one of his nearby team-mates, the small act of mercy saving him from tremendous pain as his eyeballs started blistering.

Suddenly one of the Aurors pointed behind the retreating Order team, his voice muffled as he shouted something to his fellow Ministry workers. Elaine spared a quick glance and saw a fiery phoenix mark rising from the ground. She smiled with relief and quickly let loose a shower of red sparks into the air. Immediately, the remaining two members of the Order team disappeared, one of them taking their fallen friend in side-along, and Elaine was quick to follow suit.

Elaine reappeared by the Shrieking Shack, her wand flying up as she surveyed the area quickly. Her team stood around her, staring past her, and she spun around, a powerful incantation on the tip of her tongue, only to stop as she met the amused and sad eyes of Harry Potter.

"Sorry sir," She muttered, her face flaming up in embarrassment as she realised that she had almost cursed *Harry Potter!* Harry waved it off, his eyes fixated on the dead Azkaban Guard, a barely noticeable look of sadness coming over his face for a single instant, before it was wiped away.

"Can you complete the next target without him?" He asked Elaine quietly. "Or should I..."

"We can do it, Sir," Elaine interrupted.

Harry gave her a measuring look and, reassured by the woman's determination, nodded shortly.

"Go," Was all he said and Elaine and the other two disappeared with small cracks, leaving their fallen friend behind. Harry waved his wand at the man, performing a complex transfiguration as he turned the man into a small white bone. He summoned it to his hands and pocketed it just as the first two Aurors apparated to the shack. They had been expecting a small team from the Order of Phoenix, but the sight of Harry Potter himself was enough to make them freeze up for a split second, long enough for Harry to brandish his wand. Suddenly the two Aurors felt something clamp down on their ankles and they fell to the ground, before they were lifted up and effortlessly hurled away, landing several dozen metres away with audible thumps. Harry spared them no more thought and after a seconds worth of consideration, raised his wand into the air. A small ball of fiery yellow and red flames suddenly burst from the tip of his wand and into the air, zooming upwards with great speed until a few seconds later, it was barely visible. Harry disappeared away shortly after, just as the next wave of Aurors apparated in.

The Aurors, tense and on guard, slowly paced around the shack, their eyes narrowed as they searched for the Order team. After a dozen seconds or so, one of them noticed a small glint in the sky that was quickly becoming larger and larger, and looked up. The ball of flames, which had started off as the size of a tennis ball, was descending swiftly and in its descent, it was being fuelled by the rushing air as it passed. Every second, it expanded and grew in a fiery burst, growing rapidly. The Aurors quickly apparated away as the fireball belted down towards the Shrieking Shack, and seconds later, a fiery mass the size of a dragon slammed into and through the rotted wooden shack. The preservation and strengthening charms on the shack were instantly destroyed as the shack exploded in shower of flaming debris, a wave of searing heat scorching the grass and trees. Flames jumped from the flaming hut into a nearby tree, consuming the brittle wood quickly, and it would take the Aurors over an hour before they could get the quickly spread flames under control.

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Meanwhile, inside the dark and damp surroundings of Grimmauld Place, Ron, Kingsley and Melanie silently and stealthily invaded the Black residence. The passages and hallways of the large house were dark and dusty, as if the house was not used much, but very little had changed since the Order of Phoenix had decided to use it as their residence. The large collection of house-elf heads were still proudly stuck to the wall, cobwebs and dust littered in corners and as Ron and his team went down the stairs, Mrs Black's portrait was quite visible, the curtains open and the old witch sleeping.

Suddenly a glimmer of light and the sound of drifting voices alerted Ron and with a quick motion with his hand, the small team pressed against the wall and into



the shadows. The light appeared to be coming from the kitchen door, shining underneath the crack, and through the faint echo of voices, a sharp and distinctly feminine was clearly audible.

“Bellatrix!” Melanie whispered softly, her face twisting with hatred as her frail form tensed. She was ready to burst in there and kill the Death Eater at that very moment when both Kingsley and Ron grabbed one of her arms, halting her advance. She spun around at them, her eyes angry, but the look of Ron’s face as he quickly shook his head was enough to quell her anger for a time and with a silent huff, she looked away, prepared to follow their lead.

Slowly, the group of three inched their way to the kitchen door, moving closer and closer, until they were standing directly beside it. Ron listened to the voice, still murmurs but more distinct now that he was closer, and frowned, turning his head to face Kingsley. He gestured towards the door and raised his hands in a questioning manner. Kingsley nodded and inched his head closer to the wood, trying to listen in on the conversation. After thirty or so seconds, he raised his hand and up four fingers. Ron sent him a look, clearly stating ‘are you sure?’, and Kingsley frowned and pressed his ear to the door. After a few more seconds, he placed up three fingers instead of four and sent a resolute nod towards Ron. Ron nodded thoughtfully as Kingsley made a gesture around his face, miming a Death Eater’s mask, and placed up one finger, before he gestured to his heart, the sign for Healers, and placed up two.

Ron frowned in puzzlement. The Death Eater was obviously Bellatrix but why would two Healers be making a house-call like this? He shook off the question and turned back to Kingsley, raising one hand and placing five fingers up. Kingsley nodded and turned to Melanie, who also nodded silently. Ron lowered his hand, gripped his wand and silently counted to five. Simultaneously, the three took a step backwards, raised their wands wordlessly cast a powerful unlocking charm.

The door clicked several times and Ron, Kingsley and Melanie charged forward, Kingsley using his big frame to shoulder his way through the door, splintering the wood and entering the brightly lit kitchen. They were met with the sight of Bellatrix sitting at the other side of the table, listening to what the two white-robed men closest to the door had to say.

“...and you should be in excellent health with a little rest. There were no difficulties in...” The Healer was saying as the team burst into the room. The Healer looked up, his eyes widening with surprise and fear, as a bolt of shimmering scarlet light struck him on the chest and blasted him off his feet. His partner suffered a similar fate as the two Healers were stunned in a heartbeat as the Order team stormed the room, instantaneously neutralising the closest

threats. After the split second it took to take out the Healers, the Order team immediately converged on Bellatrix, levelling their wands at the witch.

However, despite her pale cheeks and tired eyes, Bellatrix moved almost instantly and with a flicking movement of her wand, which seemed to appear in her hand like magic, the kitchen table, a sturdy rectangular piece of wood, suddenly shot up and towards them. Ron took a startled step backwards, his wand flicking as the first curse that leapt to mind burst from the tip. A powerful flash of purple light suddenly disintegrated a large chunk of the table, large enough for Ron to dodge but not large enough as to stop it from slamming into Kingsley, knocking the dark-skinned wizard across the room, while Melanie ducked gracefully.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* Bellatrix hissed angrily, her purple eyes glinting with fury, and a streak of radiating green light, accompanied by a loud, roaring noise, burst from her wand. Melanie threw herself to the side to avoid the green light, her head slamming onto the kitchen bench, while Ron, seeing that both his partners were now incapacitated, jumped forward, closing the distance between himself and Bellatrix as they began to duel furiously in the small and cramped kitchen.

Their wands flew like swords, striking each other with a shower of sparks, brightly coloured hexes and curses being parried and deflected, sometimes with magic, such as a powerful shielding charm, or sometimes by one of the wands literally pushing the other aside. This continued for several seconds as Ron desperately tried to get the upper hand on the Death Eater in front of him. Bellatrix must have seen the panic in his eyes as she let out a shrill laugh, her eyes remaining the same as she grinned ferociously, her wand flicking through the air as she continued to duel manically.

"Is the little phoenix all alone now?" mocked Bellatrix, her piercing voice full of scorn, as she parried away Ron's wand and her arm shot forward. Ron grunted in pain as the tip of Bellatrix's wand glowed with an unholy light as it sliced through his robes, sending a splatter of blood to the ground. "Is there nobody to..."

Bellatrix's taunt was suddenly interrupted as a bolt of sizzling and cackling lightning struck her on the shoulder. From the ground, Melanie glared at the Death Eater with her forehead covered with blood while Bellatrix stumbled back, the bolt of magic scorched into her flesh, cauterising her damaged veins but leaving a smoking hole above Bellatrix's breast. She stared at it, open-mouthed and speechless, as pain flooded through her features, taking a staggered step backwards.

Ron relaxed an inch, knowing that the wound would be lethal without immediate medical attention and fully expecting her to drop to the ground. Instead, a wave of insanity and madness swept over her features, her lips pulling back as white,

frothy foam spat from her mouth. Ron could only stare, almost dumb-struck, as Bellatrix let out a piercing howl of rage and anger, her voice boring into his skull like a drill into a tooth. He flicked his wand, preparing to end Bellatrix's life, when a powerful blast of dark magic suddenly blasted towards him. Ron's eyes widened as he turned and dove behind the stove as a barrage of the sickly green *Avada Kedavra* shot through the small kitchen. The room was filled with a constant eerie green light as Bellatrix continued howling madly, her rapid-pace casting of Killing Curses never faltering. One of the curses struck the wall, just centimetres from Ron's face, and he shuddered and ducked his head lower, swinging out from behind the stove to quickly glance and assess what Bellatrix was doing. It was instantly clear that the insane witch had no target as the overhead cupboards exploded in a shower of sickly green flames. Melanie had curled up near one of the fallen chairs and was trying to level her wand at Bellatrix while still remaining hidden and safe from the powerful blasts of green light that rocketed past her head every second or so. Ron gripped his wand, took a deep breath and jumped up from behind the stove, his wand flicking through the air.

A slicing curse burst from his wand like lightning, ripping into Bellatrix's chest in a spray of torn flesh and blood. Bellatrix, however, didn't seem to notice the pain as she swung around to Ron, three Killing Curses rocketing towards in an instant. Ron ducked behind the stove again as the curses flew over his head, striking the wall and ripping through plaster with searing green flames. For a moment, it seemed like the Order of Phoenix was not going to win this battle, when Bellatrix suddenly went silent. Ron heard something thump to the ground and quickly jumped out from his cover, his wand ready to blast the witch into a thousand pieces.

But Bellatrix had collapsed to the ground, her face frozen in an eternal look of madness and rage, her purple eyes haunted and insane. Ron glanced at Melanie, who was struggling to get up with her head wound, and then back towards the doorway, where Kingsley stood with a bloody nose and a split lip, his wand levelled down at the fallen Death Eater.

"Good work," Ron managed to utter, turning back to eye Bellatrix with a sense of disbelief at what had just happened. The last thirty seconds seemed to have been a blur of green light and fear and he frowned, shaking his head to clear his mind. "We should leave."

Kingsley nodded as Melanie staggered up and together, the three walked down the corridor, passing the yawning Mrs Black as she slowly awoke from her slumber and reaching the front door, which led out into the Muggle world. Ron opened it and Kingsley and Melanie walked out. As he turned to go, he suddenly saw a green flare from down the hallway as one of the fireplaces flared and he grimaced, closing the door quickly and gesturing for them to go, while his wand flicked out a number of basic Muggle-Repelling wards and Notice-Me-Not charms.

Kingsley nodded in acceptance and grabbed Melanie's arm, despite her feeble protests.

"You have a head wound," Kingsley said patiently. "You cannot apparate in this state."

Melanie hesitated and then sighed, slumping her shoulders with defeat and letting Kingsley disapparate, taking her along as side-along. Ron watched them go and then raised his wand to the sky.

*"Eternusflamma!"* He muttered and watched as a scorching light burst from his wand, something white-hot and fiery flying upwards and towards the clear blue sky. A gigantic phoenix made of dark red and orange flames arose, riding on a sea of sparkling blue magic, appeared, its green eyes glinting defiantly. Harry had specifically designed it to be invisible to all those without magical blood, so Ron didn't bother with any other repelling wards or charms and managed a ghost of a smile before he disapparated to his next target.

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That day, all around Britain, the Order of Phoenix struck back at those who destroyed their home. Ministry Warehouses were destroyed and raided, Auror safehouses taken over and ransacked, popular Wizarding locations terrorised and distinguished Death Eaters and important Ministry Workers assassinated. The Order of Phoenix struck back only two days after they had been declared as defeated and broken and over two dozen Phoenix marks soared in the sky as the Ministry frantically tried to respond. Harry Potter had wanted chaos, and chaos was what he got.

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Deep within the Ministry, far below the Atrium and the normal Departments, Lord Voldemort sat in his throne-like chair in a small but highly ornate room. Silk hangings with beautifully and delicately drawn Dark Marks hung from the ceiling. The carpet, a striking silvery fur, spread out across the floor, a single red strip leading from the main door, a spiked and foreboding contraption, to Voldemort's chair. A small bookcase filled to the brim with dusty but rare and expensive books sat in one corner, a fireplace with flickering yellow and red flames in the other. A small door lay on the wall behind Voldemort, which led into his private quarters. At that particular moment, Voldemort let his red eyes gleamed speculatively as he regarded the British Ambassador in front of him. Once again, Voldemort relished in the fear and humbleness the normally arrogant and self-centred man displayed in his mere presence and let his eyes flare for a second, causing the Ambassador, who had just glanced up, to gulp and duck his head down.

"Rise, my loyal servant," Voldemort said softly, leaning back in his throne in a display of idle laziness, as if he could care less about the report he was about to receive, which was not the case at all. "You have information about the status of

the International Confederation of Wizards? Tell me, how do they take our impending invasion of Australia?"

"Not well, Milord," said the Ambassador, rising from his feet but keeping his head bowed. "Australia is fearful, America is disbelieving and France is defiant."

"What of our allies?" Voldemort questioned quietly. "Will they stand by me?"

"Of course, Milord," The Ambassador responded quickly. "Just the other day, I had lunch with the Bulgarian and Italian Ambassadors and they stated without a shred of hesitancy that their respective governments acknowledge and respect your power and will continue to fight beside you."

Voldemort allowed a chilling smile to curve his lips, his gleaming red eyes flashing with pleasure as they drifted off into his thoughts. "Excellent," He hissed, allowing his emotions to filter through his voice. He redirected his gaze to the Ambassador, who unconsciously shuddered, and tapped his spindly fingers on the arm of his chair.

"In three days time, my Death Eaters will raid an Australian Parliament of Magical Society mining community on Easter Island, a small island of the mainland of Australia. By that time, you will have come up with a way to deflect the expected criticism I am to receive," Voldemort instructed and indulged himself in pleasure he felt when the Ambassador's face turned pale as realisation swept through him.

"Milord, may I be so blunt as to say that from a political perspective, that raid may be..." The Ambassador started, struggling with the words to continue in a less discourteous manner, before he suddenly gulped, his eyes widening as he noticed the extremely deadly expression that flittered across Voldemort's pale face.

"No, Ambassador, you may no be so blunt," Voldemort hissed menacingly, his crimson eyes flaring as he bore them into the Ambassador's skull. The Ambassador, who was well trained in Occlumency and the other forms of mental defence required for his position, suddenly felt a powerful and heavy presence press down on his mental shields and he licked his lips nervously.

"That action may lead to a war, Milord!" He managed to get out before Voldemort *pressed* down with his Legillimency and the Ambassador let out a cry of pain, falling to his knees as he clutched his head, an intense and blinding pain building up in the recesses of his skull. Suddenly, the pain was gone and the Ambassador let out a loud and ragged sigh of relief, his fearful eyes darting away from his Lords as he bowed his head, still on his knees.

"Ambassador, did you not think that I, Lord Voldemort, in all of my wisdom and experience, would consider that?" whispered Voldemort coldly, his voice barely a

breath but it echoed loudly in the small room. "I considered it Ambassador; I considered the notion of a war quite considerably before I reached this decision."

"Forgive me, Milord," The Ambassador mumbled softly and pitifully.

Voldemort regarded the prostrating man coldly as he idly considered another punishment. However, at that particular moment, somebody knocked on his door. Voldemort actually blinked in surprise, slightly amazed that somebody had the audacity to interrupt him. Nobody entered Lord Voldemort's rooms without an invitation unless it was a matter of extreme urgency, and this was why Voldemort merely waved a hand, opening the door wandlessly and letting in a grizzled Auror, one of Voldemort's trusted commanders.

"Milord, I bear grave news," The Auror Commander said immediately, bowing his head towards his Lord as he approached.

"Grave News, you say?" Voldemort echoed softly, his eyes narrowing as he regarded the Auror.

"Yes, Milord," The Auror Commander confirmed quickly as he approached Voldemort's chair. "The Order of Phoenix has attacked us."

Voldemort stiffened, a deep-seated anger brewing in the pit of his black heart as his straightened in his chair, his entire attention focussed on the man in front of him. "Continue," He ordered curtly.

"The details are still coming in, but so far, it looks like that Order of Phoenix attacked and raided a total of twenty-six locations in under two hours. The attacks seemed to have been well-planned and co-ordinated," The Auror Commander recited from his memory, ducking his head as Voldemort's eyes flared with anger. "It seems that when our Aurors arrived, the Order Teams fled and then commenced their attack on another target. The wards and protective charms on all of these locations were somehow breached and rendered ineffective. We have confirmed reports of six dead Order members, although they took their dead with them, but over three dozen Aurors were killed in the resulting battles."

Voldemort didn't let his raging fury show as he considered the Auror's words with a calm mind, his cold and calculative nature churning over the information carefully. The Auror Commander took this as a sign to continue and seemed to hesitate, before he steeled himself and continued.

"Milord, with most of the locations, it merely seemed to be raids and looting. We lost several items of great value from some of our warehouses and several of our safehouses were destroyed. However, another of the Order's objectives seemed to have been assassinations."

“Assassinations?” Voldemort repeated slowly, leaning forward with interest as he regarded the Auror carefully. “And who was assassinated, Commander?”

“Minister Moon of the Department of Magical Transportation, Head Auror Sophie Greylock, Senior Auror Williamson, Michelangelo McNair- Department of the Disposal of Renegades, The Auror Commander recited, before he took a breath to brace himself for the expected reaction of the next few names. “Hogwarts Headmaster Severus Snape...”

“Severus?” Voldemort asked, his crimson eyes widening with visible shock and anger. “Severus Snape is dead?”

“Yes milord,” the Auror Commander confirmed. “He was murdered by Harry Potter within the very walls and wards of Hogwarts.”

Voldemort was silent, his crimson eyes seemingly glazing over, before they refocused and a pale, spindly hand absently waved for the Commander to continue. The Auror Commander took another deep breath and finished his recital.

“Death Eater Lisa Turpin, Death Eater Sergio Dolohov, Death Eater Roberto Lestrangle, Death Eater Maximilius Nott,” The Auror Commander said and took a deep breath. “And Commander of the Army of Pure, Bellatrix Lestrangle, murdered in her home at Grimmauld Place.”

“Bella...” Voldemort whispered, almost sorrowfully, his crimson eyes gleaming softly. “My most loyal servant...”

“Milord, there is more,” The Auror Commander said, almost wishing he hadn’t as crimson eyes glared at him with fury. “In addition to these raids and assassinations, our records office was raided and the Auror guards slain. After careful analysis, we discovered that some of the records had been accessed and copied. The first and easiest file to detect was the old Fortress of the Ireland Plains. Apparently, Milord, it was abandoned in 1876, and now a small caretaker crew upkeeps the property.”

“The Order may be searching for a new stronghold,” murmured Voldemort speculatively, his crimson eyes gleaming with thought as he shoved away his anger over the loss of his Bellatrix Lestrangle. “Continue.”

“After several detection spells, we picked up a very subtle tampering on another file,” The Auror Commander reported. “This file concerned itself with a lesser known Fortress nestled in the Welsh mountains. It served as a defensive post for our British Warlock’s when the Roman Legion invaded and its wards are still operational. Logically sir, this fortress would serve as a better defensive position than the old Fortress of the Ireland Plains.”

"You suggest that the first was a diversion?" Voldemort asked softly, his eyes narrowing thoughtfully. "I have no doubt that you are right. However, with this second file..."

He trailed off, deep in thought, and the Auror Commander smiled.

"Yes Milord, I understand," He said. "After several more scans, each more revealing and sensitive than the last, we found tampering on a third file. It was very slight, Milord, very professional. Were it not for one of your Death Eater's who insisted that we triple-check everything, then we would have missed it."

"Do you have a point, Commander?" Voldemort asked coldly.

"Yes Milord. This third file, it was regarding the latest ward schemes of Hogwarts," answered the Auror Commander with a small smile on his face.

"Hogwarts..." Voldemort hissed softly to himself. "Yes, that was why Severus had to die. With his death, the wards we have placed will be considerable weakened, forcing us to rely on the ancient wards, which, I suspect, would not provide the Order with much trouble."

"Milord, your orders?" The Auror Commander asked.

Voldemort considered the information he had just been given, his mind quickly creating the first stages of an ambush for the Order of Phoenix. When he had created the starting stones of his plan, he let his crimson eyes rest into those of the Auror Commanders.

"The castle is to be lockdown. No student may send messages and the Floo network is to be shut off," Voldemort ordered coldly. "As that is happening, I want three bastions of loyal Aurors to be sent to the castle. I will update these Orders later- for the meantime, see that this is done correctly and *silently*."

"Yes, Milord, I will see to it myself," The Auror Commander bowed and quickly left the room in a hurried pace, while Voldemort turned back to the silent and ignored Ambassador, who jerked as Voldemort addressed him.

"This raid will be called off, but be prepared to receive these orders again at a later date. Now, I want you to return to the International Confederation of Wizards and do everything on your power to denounce the Australian Parliament into both financing the Order and giving them a safe-haven to launch their raids. You will receive definite evidence from one of my agents before the assembly commences that will imply that the Australian Parliament is working with the Order of Phoenix. Now, leave!" Voldemort ordered the tone of his voice quick and curt.



The Ambassador nodded quickly and bowed, but Voldemort barely noticed as the man left the room, closing the door quietly behind him. Instead, his eyes grew pensive and glassy as he reflected on what he had heard in the last two minutes. Suddenly, without warning, Voldemort snarled and slammed his hands down on the arms of his seat, his crimson eyes flaring with untold of rage. Large cracks appeared in the wooden seat as dark power seeped from Voldemort's frame, his pale face twisted up with rage and hatred.

"Impressive, Potter," Voldemort hissed to himself in hatred. "It may be inevitably futile but it is impressive nonetheless!"

Slowly, he calmed himself down, his immense dark powers sliding back into his thin and pale frame. The scar on the top of his head burned with a constant throb but Voldemort ignored the battle wound as he once again begun to plot the destruction of the Order of Phoenix. Let them come to Hogwarts, let them come and face their deaths! But first, there was obviously classified information being leaked from the Ministry. That was the only way the Order could have struck so effectively. That meant that there was a spy, a high-ranking spy. Voldemort frowned as he considered his options. Whatever course of action he took, the capture and elimination of this spy was of top priority.

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Because of the time difference between Australia and England, by the time Harry had finished the last of his assassinations, night had come to New Azkaban when he used an International Portkey to return. He staggered on his feet but miraculously managed to stop himself falling over foolishly as he glanced around, seeing many of the small fireplaces in front of the rows of enchanted tents flickering. A figure loomed up to him front the old stone ruins and Harry recognised Ron's scarred face.

"Ron, I heard you ran into a few problems with Bellatrix," Harry greeted his old friend, a small smile on his lips.

Ron sighed, rubbing a hand over his weary face. "You better believed," he muttered. "I tell you one thing, she went out with a bang alright."

Harry allowed amusement to flitter over his features before his face hardened with seriousness. "Is the Azkaban Guard ready for tomorrow?" He asked.

Ron hesitated, chewing on the bottom of his lip. "Whatever happens, they'll give it their best," He replied.

"That's all I could ask for," Harry murmured. "Get a good nights rest Ron, you'll need it."

Ron nodded and as Harry turned to the ruins of New Azkaban and started walking towards his temporary office, Ron called out from behind him.

"Harry, you have a guest,"

Harry paused, cocking his head in surprise, but continued on, walking past the large and crumbling arched doorway and into the nearest door on the left. He opened the door and entered, seeing Christina handing tea to a heavily robed guest, who glanced up as soon as she heard the door open. Harry let his features come together in a show of tired affection as Gabrielle Delacour beamed brilliantly at him.

"*Bonjour*," She greeted in French, before switching back to flawless English. "You look tired."

"I am tired," Harry agreed as took of his cloak, handing it to Christina and sitting down as she placed it on the rack. "I assume you have some news for me?"

"The Assembly did not go well," Gabrielle admitted after a pause. "The English Ambassador all but labelled Australia as a tool of the Order, accusing them as accessories to every Auror you have ever killed. Bulgaria and Italy are, of course, siding with the English and the Americans seem to want to stay out of this, although they are urging for peace."

"After tomorrow Gabrielle, it won't matter at all," Harry told the quarter-Veela wearily and leant back in his comfortable armchair.

"Yes," Gabrielle said thoughtfully, her blue eyes watching him carefully. "I heard about that. Are you sure that it is...wise?"

"No," Harry replied honestly a small grin. "But it's the best opportunity we have. If we don't do this, then we'll have lost the last chance we could ever get to win this before a war."

Gabrielle nodded to herself and the room fell silent as Christina left, her eyes lingering on Harry's guest. Harry conjured a tea-cup and some steaming tea with a wave of his wand and took it, taking a sip and sighing as the liquid warmed the bottom of his stomach. Gabrielle sipped her own tea, her delicate fingers tapping the edge of her saucer as she and Harry merely sat in the comfortable silence, content with their own thoughts. However, they were interrupted by a small knock on the door.

"Enter," Harry called out, raising his eyes towards the doorway.

The door opened and Christian walked in, leading a rather large man with cold and shrewd eyes and tanned blonde hair inside. Harry didn't personally

recognise the man but Gabrielle stiffened almost unnoticeably in her seat, her fingers clasping around her teacup as she forced herself to take another casual sip.

“Harry Potter? I am Stephen McDermon, the Australian Ambassador for the International Confederation of Wizards,” The porky man introduced himself, throwing out a clammy hand that Harry took and shook firmly without hesitation. The Australian Ambassador smiled slightly and let his eyes run over the room. Almost immediately, they found Gabrielle and widened comically.

“Mrs French Ambassador?” He gasped, clasping a hand to his chest. “But...what...you’re one of them?”

“Of course,” Gabrielle answered coolly. “I have always been loyal to Harry Potter, ever since he rescued me when I was eight. When he took command of the Order of Phoenix, the best way to show this loyalty was to join.”

Stephen looked almost too stunned to speak and Harry led him gently across the room, pausing only to conjure an armchair and pushing the limp Ambassador down into the seat. Harry returned to his seat, sitting down and placing a benign smile on his face.

“I assume that you are here to politely, but firmly, tell us that the Order is no longer welcome in Australia?” Harry said, getting straight to the point.

Stephen blinked, taken aback, but nodded. “I would have said it in different words but essentially, yes.”

“Well rest assured, Mr Ambassador, the military aspects of the Order will have left Australia by tomorrow afternoon,” Harry answered and watched with amusement at the look of relief that came over the Ambassador’s face. “We are departing for a mission of great importance. Should we succeed, then we will not need accommodations in your fine land. Should we fail, we will most likely be dead or captured, and the civilians of the Order will have already started evacuating to countries around the globe, and we will not need the accommodations of your fine land. ”

“I see,” was all Stephen uttered.

“Was there anything else that you required?” Harry asked politely. “Tea, perhaps?”

“No thankyou,” Stephen said slowly, his eyes flicking between Gabrielle and Harry. “This meeting has certainly proceeded faster than usual and my objective is complete. I would stay for tea but you must understand that my presence here does not reflect kindly on my superiors.”

"Then if you must leave, you must leave," Harry answered and stood up as the Stephen eased himself off his chair, still looking slightly bewildered at the fast past of events. "I wish you a good night, Ambassador."

Stephen absently nodded as Christina wordlessly opened the door, revealing two large Australian Rangers standing motionless outside. Without a word, the small group walked away from Harry Potter as Christina exited the room and shut the door softly. Harry sighed, the weariness draining back into his features, and collapsed in his chair again. He took his tea cup and had another small sip of it, breathing out the tension in his body.

"Anyway Gabrielle, you were telling me about the ICW?" Harry asked after a few minutes silence and settled himself into his seat, getting comfortable as he sipped his tea again. As Gabrielle began talking, Harry devoted his entire attention to her as he ignored his weariness. He needed all the information he could get if tomorrow were to succeed.

## **Salem Scrolls**

### ***Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix Strike Back!***

### ***Dozens Dead! High-Level British Ministry Workers Assassinated!***

### ***Britain is in Chaos!***

*Yesterday, the world watched with great surprise and shock as Harry Potter, leader of the infamous Order of Phoenix, launched a vicious attack directed at both the British Ministry of Magic and its employees. Unconfirmed reports coming in from our sources indicate that over twenty locations were attacked by small groups of Order members and that the Death Toll has so far, reached well into the fifties.*

*Several of the locations, including Diagon Alley, a popular shopping arcade, and Hogsmeade, a small town on the outskirts of Hogwarts School of Dark Arts, were publicly attacked and although there have been no reported civilian casualties, sources indicate that over twenty Aurors were killed in the defence of these locations. It has also been confirmed that several private and protected Ministry Warehouses and Safehouses were raided, also resulting in several dozen Auror casualties.*

*While many teams of the Order struck these locations, other teams went after high-level Ministry of Magic employees, ambushing and killing them in their homes. There have been confirmed reports that Harry Potter himself invaded Hogwarts and struck down Headmaster Severus Snape, brutally maiming and killing the man. Although the British Ministry of Magic has not released a list of names of those were assassinated in such a manner, unconfirmed reports indicate that several powerful Death Eater's, Britains most elite wizards and witches, were killed, including the Commander of the Army of the Pure, Bellatrix Lestrage.*

*The Order of Phoenix was thought to have been severely crippled, if not dispersed, by the attack the British Ministry forces launched on their fortress at Azkaban Island only two days ago. The Order reputedly lost many of its members, although the bulk of its people, including Harry Potter and his notorious Second-In-Command, Ronald Weasley, managed to escape. The British Ministry of Magic issued a declaration of war against the Australian Parliament of Magical Society in response, holding them responsible for this escape and accusing them of hiding the Order of Phoenix from British Law Enforcement.*

*These attacks have shocked and stunned the United Warlock's Council of America. Several of the members have proclaimed the attacks as "barbaric" and*

*“an act of terror”, however, the reaction in the American Community has varied. Supporters of Harry Potter continue to proclaim their approval of his actions.*

*“Lord Voldemort has declared war on Australia and it’s only a matter of time before he invades,” An anonymous supporter of Harry Potter stated. “Now, more than ever, we need the Order of Phoenix to continue their strong and righteous stance against evil.”*

*However, Harry Potter has received a wave of outraged criticism from other members of the community, who view his actions as inexcusable.*

*“This is worse than anything he has ever done before,” An opponent of Harry Potter stated firmly. “Death and casualties in battle are, unfortunately, to be expected, but assassinations? Attacking public locations? Raiding and murdering school staff? This just shows the world the levels of depravity that Harry Potter will resort to.”*

*These lightning-fast raids were conducted as Britain, behind the closed doors of the International Confederation of Wizards, stated their reasons behind their declaration of War against Australia. Two of Britain’s most powerful allies, Bulgaria and Italy have publicly proclaimed their support for Lord Voldemort and have denounced Australia for contributing towards the Order of Phoenix. Negotiations are still underway but the prospect of a war looks more and more likely.*

*Meanwhile, the British Ministry of Magic has tightened its security, deploying most of its Auror forces to public locations in an effort to reassure the panicked public. More attacks by Harry Potter are to be expected. Bulgaria has pledged to send a legion of its own Aurors in a matter of days in order to secure and defend against the Order of Phoenix. Only time will reveal Harry Potter’s next move and only time will tell how the assemblies at the International Confederation of Wizards will fare with this new and brutal wave of attacks. During that time, Harry Potter remains free, continuing the civil war that has reigned for over twenty-five years. Will Britain ever know peace?*

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In the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, the sun glared brightly in the sky as a wave of sweltering heat swept through a small island. On this island stood a large pyramid, its existence hidden from all those without magical blood in their veins, and inside this pyramid, the International Confederation of Wizards once again assembled to meet. In the large assembly room, dozens of ambassadors stood in silence and respect as the three ancient Supreme Mugwumps hobbled into the room, their hair white with age and their heavily wrinkled faces showing their weariness. It was obvious to the Ambassadors in the assembly room that these wizards were in the large stages of their life, easily past the age of three-hundred. Albus Dumbledore and two other wizards of power and popularity had

once been chosen to become the successors of these wizards, who had held their positions since the inception of the International Confederation of Wizards in the late 1700's. However, Albus Dumbledore had been murdered over twenty years ago and more recently; the other two chosen successors had met with bizarre accidents and deaths, leaving the Supreme Mugwumps in a quandary. According to the original charter, if no successors were to be found then the ambassadors for the nation of Britain, Bulgaria and France, the oldest and most powerful Wizarding nations, would be appointed in their stead.

At the moment, though, the Supreme Mugwumps were not dead and they slowly sunk into their velvet seats, almost sighing in unison as they did so. The Ambassador's followed suit, and the Head Supreme Mugwump looked up with squinted eyes, peering over the large podium he was sitting on and onto the stage in the middle of the room, where the Ambassadors for Australia and Britain occupied once again. Around them, a dozen of the most powerful ambassadors sat closest to the front while elevated above them sat dozens others, those who represented the lesser known and less powerful magical nations

"Ah, yes," The Supreme Mugwump mumbled to himself quietly. "Where were we? I believe...yes, the Ambassador representing Britain, you were saying?"

"Thankyou, Supreme Mugwump," The British Ambassador said amiably and turned to the Australian Ambassador, his pleasant face evaporating immediately as an icy-cold look of restrained anger and outrage replaced it, his eyes glinting as he regarded the Australian Ambassador with barely hidden disgust. "I believe that you have heard of the Order of Phoenix's recent wave of attacks?"

"Indeed I have," The Australian Ambassador said calmly and neutrally, despite the obvious hostility the other ambassador was showing him. "Let me extend to you the sympathies of the..."

"Damn your sympathies!" The British Ambassador snapped, cutting off the other man amidst small murmurs of surprise from the other ambassadors.

"Mr British Ambassador..." One of the Supreme Mugwumps started, his tired voice cutting away the small murmurs that had begun to spread.

"Supreme Mugwumps and fellow ambassadors," The British Ambassador said loudly, moving away from his podium and letting his eyes rake over his fellow ambassadors, especially the quiet and lesser known ambassadors sitting in the back. "Yesterday, the Order of Phoenix launched attacks of such ferocity, that they rival those of twenty-years past. Dozens of hard-working and courageous Aurors are dead and over ten of the most valued and cherished members of our community were brutally murdered in their homes! Terror has gripped our nation and there is chaos within our Ministry! The Order of Phoenix has terrorised our nation once more and they did so *within Australian borders!* This is inexcusable,

unacceptable and intolerable. We will not let this stand! Not only has Australia provided aid and supplies necessary for their pathetic attempts to seize power for themselves, they have now granted them a sanctuary that allows them to launch their attacks, for we cannot strike back at them without causing an international incident! Mr Australian Ambassador, explain the actions of your nation to this Assembly and while you do so, explain to me why I should not return to Lord Voldemort and recommend for an immediate military response!"

The Australian Ambassador was silent as he eyed the British Ambassador carefully, as if he were debating on how he should approach a wild and dangerous animal rather. Meanwhile, loud murmurs burst from around the room, most noticeable from the Bulgarian Ambassador, who thumped down on the table with his large meaty hands, his face reflecting his grim approval of the statement. Just as one of the Supreme Mugwumps was going let out a loud crack with his wand, Gabrielle Delacour cleared her throat loudly, her pretty blue eyes narrowed at the British Ambassador.

"Did your Ministry detect any inbound International Portkeys?" She asked crisply, her silvery blonde hair glinting in the light. "Could it not be that Harry Potter, contrary to your 'evidence', in fact, never left Britain?"

This silenced most of the murmurs and muttering and the Supreme Mugwump lowered his wand, clearly as interested in the British Ambassador's response as all of the ambassadors were.

The British Ambassador turned towards Gabrielle, his face grimacing. "Unfortunately, the Order of Phoenix somehow managed to penetrate the wards of all of the attacked locations, including any defensive and track wards. How they managed to accomplish this feat is both a mystery and a great concern to us. However, we know without a doubt that Harry Potter resides in Australia."

"Your wards were bypassed? Hmm, perhaps your people are less satisfied with Lord Voldemort's regime than you would like us to believe?" Gabrielle asked with an air of innocence, but her lips quirked in a small smile. However, the British Ambassador didn't smile, nor did he frown. Instead, he merely inclined his head to her words as if she had raised a serious issue.

"Perhaps you are right," He said slowly. "It may be possible that Harry Potter has a sympathiser deep within the Ministry. It would be arrogant to claim that he would not be able pull off such a meagre feat. I'm sure he would have little trouble recruiting his supporters within our Ministry given that he seemed to have very little trouble recruiting supporters within this very Confederation, even within this very room!"

Unlike his previous statements, this accusation produced no audible reaction. Nobody in the assembly made a move, their eyes widening in surprise and shock



at the very nature of the allegation. The large hall was deathly quiet and the British Ambassador seemed to take a smug pleasure into the reactions he had garnered, before the Head Supreme Mugwump leaned forward, his ancient eyes serious and hard.

"Mr British Ambassador," he said wheezily but coherently. "Are you aware of the severity of these accusations?"

"I am, Supreme Mugwump," The British Ambassador said seriously, his face hard. "I am all too aware of what I have just said."

The Head Supreme Mugwump stared at him for a few moments and then nodded slowly, leaning back in his chair. The British Ambassador took this as a sign to continue and with slow and careful movements, raised his wand towards his desk and concentrated. A large bundle of photographs suddenly rose from his desk and the British Ambassador, with another swish of his wand, banished a single photo to each ambassadorial podium and three to the large podium of the Supreme Mugwumps. The Head Supreme Mugwump took hold of the photo that zoomed towards him with suprisingly quick reflexes and studied it intently. It showed a black and white photo of the Australian Ambassador shaking hands with a man who could only Harry Potter inside a small crumbling stone room. The two men continued to shake hands while a dark-cloak feminine figure sat at the edge of the photo, her face hidden from view.

A loud tittering roar washed over the assembly as several of the ambassadors literally cried out with surprise and shock. The Australian Ambassador seemed to be unaware of the various looks of disbelief and surprise that he was receiving as he gripped his photo with clenched knuckles, his face pale and his eyes wide with dismay. Meanwhile, Gabrielle scanned the photo with her own feeling of impending doom, her face calm but her eyes resigned as she finally comprehended the smug glances that the British Ambassador had been giving her. Even so, she continued to play her role until the very end and after clearing her throat once again, spoke up.

"Where did you obtain this? How can we be sure that this photo is authentic?" She asked with a note of scorn in her voice.

The British Ambassador let a sneer wash over his face, his eyes glinting coldly as he answered.

"This was generously provided to us by a concerned Australian Ranger who was on the Ambassadors escort detail. He believed that his Parliament should not be associating with such criminals. It has been examined and given certificates of authentication by fourteen different specialists, three which came from your own nation," He said coldly. "Yes, it is authentic. However, if you feel that this photo

does, ah, not do justice to Mr Australian Ambassador's figure, then perhaps this equally authentic photo will."

Another stack of photos was suddenly levitated from the British Ambassador's desk and banished to the ambassadors around the large room. Gabrielle caught hers with a sinking heart but she kept her composure as she stared at the British Ambassador icily, not even bothering to look at the next photo. She already knew what it contained and sure enough, another wave of mutters and whispers echoed around the room as she suddenly became the focus of her fellow ambassador's scrutiny.

"Are these photos accurate?" The Head Supreme Mugwump asked in a trembling voice, glancing at Gabrielle closely. The hall fell silent as they awaited her answer.

Gabrielle, seeing no point in her charade, squared her shoulders and straightened her back, taking a quick glance down at the photo to make sure that she truly was implicated. After she saw her own face smiling warmly at Harry Potter, she raised her eyes back the Head Supreme Mugwump and answered him.

"It depends on your definition of accuracy, Supreme Mugwump," Gabrielle answered smoothly. "If you are asking if the Australian Ambassador or any member of the Parliament of Magical Society are in league with Harry Potter, then the answer is no. However, if you are asking if I am an agent of Harry Potter and if I am a proud and loyal member of the Order of Phoenix, then the answer is yes."

Soft murmurs flittered into the hall, murmurs that quickly grew to into loud mutterings and talking. After a few seconds, the entire Assembly was in an uproar as Ambassadors began to yell down questions, criticism or support for either Gabrielle or the British Ambassador, both who continued their icy staring contest. The Supreme Mugwumps also seemed similarly shocked, particularly the Head Supreme Mugwump, who leant back in his chair with a groan.

"Mr British Ambassador," Gabrielle said loudly and firmly and the assembly instantly went silent. "For some time, you have alluded to my sister's former connection to the Order of Phoenix and implied a great many times that I was also a member. Well, congratulations, for you were correct! I am an agent of the Order of Phoenix and I have been since I was fifteen!"

She stood up, allowing her body to fall into a regal poise as she finally lifted her eyes away from her opponents and let them drift over the assembly, her hands emphasising her words and her voice rising as she passionately continued her speech.

“Lord Voldemort is evil. You can approach his ideals and methods from any direction you wish but in the end, he is evil! He is a madman, a maniac, and he desires nothing more than death and destruction! He *longs* for it! It is his ultimate wish to drive the world of magic into a war. He does not care if Britain wins or loses; he merely wishes to be a part of the destruction that such a war would reap on our world. Lord Voldemort will *thrive* in the bloodshed and mayhem that will ensue and that is one of the many reasons why I oppose him! It is why I aid Harry Potter by informing him of the proceedings in both the French Ministry of Magic and in the International Confederation of Wizards!”

The assembly was quiet, all of them entranced as Gabrielle let out quarter-Veela heritage shine through. Even though every ambassador and Supreme Mugwump were proficient in the art of Occlumency, which could resist the Veela charm, the physical effects of such an action awed the assembly as Gabrielle’s eyes sparkled with passion, her silvery hair shining beautifully as it sensually swayed in an invisible wind and her very form taking on a faint golden glow.

“Of course, there are many other reasons why I oppose Lord Voldemort, some of them personal. Did you know, Mr British Ambassador, that when you constantly referred to my sister as a member of an organisation of terror, every time you mentioned her death, you demeaned her? Do you know what happened when my sister was captured just after the Fall of the Ministry, the battle where her husband fell in the line of duty against evil? She was tortured, Mr Ambassador, tortured and brutally raped by the servants of Lord Voldemort, the same servants that you call ‘*valued and cherished members of society*’. My sister suffered extraordinary under the hands of the Death Eaters for a many days, before she finally managed to relieve herself of her suffering and ending her life. I was told that she managed to smuggle in one of the toenails that the Death Eater’s pulled from her feet and she slit her own throat with it.”

“Did Lord Voldemort honestly expect that I would sit back and let him do the same to other people? Did he think that I would stand aside and let him torture, maim and murder other wizards and witches outside of Britain? Your leader, your *Master*, is a pathetic excuse for a life form. Lord Voldemort has tainted and dehumanised himself with his horrible rituals and dark enchantments, and we can no longer consider him as human. He should be put down like an uncontrollable magical creature!”

“Make no mistake; I am a loyal and proud member of the Order of Phoenix,” Gabrielle concluded, her voice dramatically decreasing as she finished in a whisper. “And you cannot kill the phoenix, Mr British Ambassador, for out of the ashes of the old, a new beacon of light will *a/ways* emerge!”

She flung her head up proudly, her eyes and conscience clear while the assembly remained silent. Many ambassadors seemed to have fallen into a reverie, others eyed her with a sense of respect and admiration and others

shifted in their seats guiltily. On the other end of the spectrum, a great many of the lesser nations who bowed to the power of Lord Voldemort were eying her with hostility and disgust, while the Bulgarian Ambassador was practically frothing at the mouth, gripping the edge of his table tightly.

“So, you imply that the French Ministry of Magic do not know of your allegiances?” The Head Supreme Mugwump asked wearily, glancing at Gabrielle closely.

“No, they remain unaware,” Gabrielle answered clearly and honestly, flicking her silvery hair as she let her Veela powers fade away.

The British Ambassador let a twisted grin come to his face as he faced his rival for what he thought would be the last time. “In the end, “He said triumphantly. “I was right. You are nothing more than an Order bitch! You should be disqualified from the Confederation at once! If I were in charge...”

“But you are not,” The Head Supreme Mugwump interrupted coldly, his ancient face showing his disapproval. “We are and Gabrielle Delacour’s fate lies in the hands of us and her government. We shall attend to a short recess, say, two hours, before we continue. Mrs French Ambassador, I will be alerting your government to what you have confessed here today and urge that they send an immediate replacement. You have shamed your nation with your association with Harry Potter, despite how noble you believe the reasons are. You will be sent to your suite and detained under guard until the next meeting, where the proper course of action will be decided.”

Gabrielle bowed her head in response, a strange combination of resignation and determination on her face, and the other ambassadors began to leave the hall. As she turned to go, meeting the conceited stare of the British Ambassador with an icy glower, the Head Supreme Mugwump spoke again.

“And Mr British Ambassador, should you ever use such vulgarity in this hall again, I shall see that you are replaced.”

The British Ambassador twitched in response, his haughty smile dropping quickly as he murmured his apologies, before he stumbled as Gabrielle knocked past him, a small smile of amusement on her face. This dropped quickly as the full weight of her predicament bore down on her and she barely noticed the two robed guards that drifted behind her as she walked to her room, moving past the expensive and beautiful hallways and rooms without even so much as a glance. In the end, she concluded as she opened the door to her suite, she could only pray that Harry would be successful today. Her fate was ultimately in his hands.

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Harry Potter sat at a small, wooden desk located within his crumbling stone room. The fireplace was long dead and the sun was beginning to drop, although the rather large time difference between England and Australia meant that the target would be attacked at roughly lunchtime. Harry frowned as he scrawled something into a small, worn leather-bound book and after a moment's hesitation, signed off with a large flourish. He let out an almost silent sigh as he closed the book and leant back in his chair, his eyes distant. His heart was pounding and his adrenaline was racing. It was almost strange, Harry reflected, to know that a conflict spanning over twenty-seven years was about to end and although Harry no longer dwelled in his emotions as he once did, nervousness wracked his entire body as he took a deep breath, bringing up his Occlumency shields and closing his eyes in an attempt to quell his growing anxiety.

He was interrupted in his quest to calm down by a loud squawk as a proud yet drained eagle owl swooped down towards him, coming into the room through one of the many holes in the ceiling. Harry blinked in surprise and was up in a rush, catching the owl that by all appearance had flown from England itself. Gently, he detached the black-ribboned scroll and with a short flick of his wand and a simultaneous snap of his fingers, conjured first an empty ceramic bowl and then filled it with water. The owl gave a grateful and feeble hoot as Harry gently set it down and it started lapping at the water furiously, while Harry worked through the enchantments on the parchment and unravelled it, reading the message quickly.

*The Atrium is accessible from 1:00 pm – 1:24 pm. I have organised for the wards to be reactivated onto alert status when you arrive, which should delay the inbound Aurors for a moment. The Dark Lord has a secret room where he spends most of his time at somewhere under the Ministry. I believe the location is centred somewhere in the Department of Mysteries. To my knowledge, he still wears his Horcrux around his neck. Many of the Aurors and Death Eaters have been sent to Hogwarts, so I believe that your feint worked. Should the Dark Lord fall, I believe that the fighting within the Ministry should cease almost immediately, with only the most loyal continuing the fight.*

*I wish you luck, Harry, for you will need it. Know that my loyalty and heart is still yours, no matter what. You are my only friend and the only person I can call family. Should I be able to, I will provide assistance, because if you should fail and fall today, you shall fall as I fight by your side. Look after yourself.*

*Your most Loyal*

Harry finished the letter, his eyes glittering strangely as pride and affection thumped through his heart. He made a move to destroy the letter and then hesitated, before placing it gently within his leather-bound book. He took another deep breath as the door opened and he turned to see Christina enter the room, her eyes full of trepidation.

"Christina," Harry greeted gently. He picked up the book and handed it to her, his eyes serious yet tender. "If we fail today, you'll effectively be in command because the senior members of the Order are all accompanying me. This contains a lot of information about the Order, our allies and friends and our safehouses located all over the world. I've also put in everything I know about Lord Voldemort, his childhood and upbringing, his rise to power, his horcruxes, his allies, his motives, strategies and desires. It will become your responsibility to ensure that once Lord Voldemort reveals his true intentions to the world, this book is delivered to those who can best fight him. It will also become your responsibility to evacuate this area because you will be vulnerable once we are gone."

"Sir...I..." Christina mouthed, her eyes glistening with tears as Harry hushed her gently. She glanced down at the book, eyeing the thing as if it were a precious treasure, before looking up to meet his eyes, an expression of steadfast determination. "I will keep this book and do as you have instructed," she finished firmly.

Harry smiled softly and clasped her shoulder, squeezing it softly.

"I had no doubt that you would do otherwise," He murmured and with one last gentle smile, walked from the room, content in the knowledge that his legacy would live on if he were to fall today.

He exited the large, chipped stone archway and out into the pleasant warmth. A cool breeze blew into his hair, ruffling the inky and greying strands as he surveyed the last remnants of the Order of Phoenix in front of him. Sixty-three brown robed men and women stood in formation, their backs straight, shoulders set and faces determined. Amongst them, he could see Hermione, Neville, Luna and even Ginny, who had, despite her crippling wounds, refused to stay behind. Harry spied Ron making a last headcount, the scarred redhead moving quickly but calmly as his eyes darted over the rows, pausing to smile softly at his wife. When he was done, he nodded approvingly before he suddenly became aware of Harry and approached him.

"We have sixty-three members of the Order of Phoenix who will participate in this raid, sixty-five including us two," He told Harry softly, his brown eyes, although resigned to whatever happened today, alive with passion and excitement. "Fifty-four more people volunteered, but most of them were either too young or too injured to be brought along and some were, frankly, just going to get in our way."

"Thankyou Ron," Harry murmured softly, sweeping his gaze over the silent and still soldiers in front of him. Around the formation of soldiers, standing amongst the rows of white tents, stood the civilian population of the Order, the children, the elderly, the crippled and those unable to fight for whatever reason. They observed the proceedings silently, most of them watching Harry as he

approached the formation, stopping just before them. Taking a deep breath, he opened his mouth and began his speech.

“Let me start this speech by telling you how proud I am to have fought beside all of you. The Order of Phoenix started out as a small vigilante group over sixty years ago and yet today, we are the last remaining light in a nation repressed by darkness. All of you have committed yourself bravely and courageously to the cause, to peace and justice, and all of you have fought admirably, each in your different ways. Not only have you stood up against the evil and oppression of Lord Voldemort, but you made one of the hardest decisions a witch or wizard could make. You chose to do what was right over what was easy, and for that, I give you my sincerest thanks and gratitude.”

“I know that many of you have speculated about the target of this attack. Some of you believe it is Hogwarts, others believe it is another fortress or castle where we can rebuild our fortifications and continue our raids. Only a select handful knows the truth, which I will now reveal to you. We do not go to seek another stronghold for our Order; rather, we go to deprive the enemy of theirs! Today, we attack the Ministry of Magic! Our loyal agents have ensured that we can enter through the Atrium and that the wards will once again become activated, blocking any inbound Aurors for a short while. When we enter the Atrium, you will do all that you can do to secure it against the Aurors. We have tricked Voldemort into thinking that our true target is Hogwarts and as we speak, his forces wait in ambush for us. The Ministry will be relatively emptied of Aurors; however, it will not be unguarded. Our assault and defence of the Atrium, however, is nothing more than a diversion. Every Auror or security guard within the Ministry will immediately head for the, which should draw them from the rest of the Departments. This is when I and a select team will advance into the Ministry. We will seek out Lord Voldemort and do whatever it takes to destroy him, once and for all.”

“Lord Voldemort is powerful, granted, but he is not invulnerable. Although you are not aware of the circumstances, at the present moment, Lord Voldemort is currently at his weakest and most vulnerable state. Our chances for success, despite the odds against us, will never rise to this level again. Yesterdays raids have thrown the Ministry and England into a state of chaos. They weren't expecting us to bite back so soon and we've gained a tremendous advantage. Dozens of Aurors are away from the Ministry, performing guard duty at various locations. The Ministry is in a state of destabilisation, especially after the loss of so many high-profile and important people. Coupled amongst this is the start of a power vacuum and should we prevail on this day, we can use this to our advantage. We are at a key point in history where we must make a final stand.”

Harry paused, his audience captivated by his words as they traced his slow, pacing movements with their eyes. Once again, he raised his head and stared at the men and women, *his* men and women.

"This is it. For twenty years, Voldemort has ruled over the Ministry of Magic and Britain with terror and darkness. He has exploited and oppressed the wizards and witches of our nation with ruthlessness and apathy. For twenty years, we've fought against him with all of our power. The past twenty years of conflict and violence will soon end. For sixty years, the Order of Phoenix has fought against Voldemort, first as a vigilante group, then as an army, then as a group of outlaws. It will all end tonight, one way or another, and whatever happens today, we will always be remembered as heroes for our actions, for our bravery. If we fall, the fight will not end with us. The Order, while weakened, will not be broken. But if we succeed, if we win, then our hardships and our losses will not have been in vain! Our chances for victory are far greater than they have ever been! The timing is right and the circumstances are right. We have to do this now."

"Voldemort has been weakened and made vulnerable. The Ministry is disorganised. Britain is in chaos. Once again, we are ready to do what is right over what is easy! For once, we will take the fight to them! Today, we will fight and triumph over oppression, tyranny and darkness! Today, we will show the world that we are still strong! We have not been broken! We have not fled in terror! As long as Lord Voldemort lives, we will not remain idle! *Today, we show the world that you cannot kill the phoenix!*"

Harry's thundering voice died as it washed over the clearing, penetrating every tent, every room and every ear. There was no applause from the soldiers in formation but many of them straightened up, a look of resolve sweeping through their faces as their eyes hardened. Several of them saluted proudly, others thumping their chests or slapping their wands against their palms. However, a single, elderly witch with a limp slowly walked forward, her wand in her hand. All eyes swung to her as she raised the wand and spoke in a quavering yet firm voice.

*"Eternusflamma!"*

A roaring cone of bright light burst from the tip of her wand as a fiery red and golden Phoenix soared majestically in the air, riding on a wave of sparkling and shimmering blue magic. It hung in the air, beautiful hues of red and gold beaming down on the Order of Phoenix and radiating a sense of righteousness, of justice. A second later, another flaming phoenix filled the air and the first of the civilians begun to cheer. A roaring wave of approval and applause burst from the surrounding wizards and witches, loud cracks burst into the air as some brandished their wands. A shower of yellow and green sparks flew into the air, created by a cheering group of young witches. The Azkaban Guard and volunteers, however, moved into action amidst the heartening cheers and loud applause, each member lifting a small part of a very long rope that coiled around their ankles. Harry eyed Ron and nodded grimly as they both walked up to the Guard, each wizard grabbing a section of the rope. Harry took a moment to glance around, first at the resolute, determined and unafraid witches and wizards



by his side, next at the cheering and supporting elderly, children and others. A warm smile graced his lips as he smiled softly, before he turned back to his soldiers and raised his wand, letting it rest on the outstretched rope. With a final glance at his surroundings, he tapped the rope with his wand. The rope suddenly started to vibrate madly, a blue glow emanating from it as it shivered and trembled in his grasp. Harry lowered his wand to his side as the vibrations continued and suddenly, with a tug at his navel that quickly grew to encompass his entire body, the entire army was sucked into a vortex of swirling and flashing colours and noises.

The Final Battle was about to begin.

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Harry squeezed his eyes shut as he was pulled and tugged through a whirling spectrum of colours. Flashes of light drove into his skull, pounding away into his brain with heavy blows. The sensation of feeling his entire body being pulled by an immense force seemed to last for hours, but in reality, it was only a few minutes later when Harry, and the entire Order of Phoenix, was thrown out of the vortex with force. Harry's eyes immediately shot open as he landed roughly on a floor of polished dark floorboards and he jumped to his feet, his eyes blazing with determination as he quickly glanced around at his surroundings.

He had just landed in the middle of long and splendid hall, with shiny dark wooden walls. Highly wrought and gilded fireplaces were set in the walls to his left and right, left for arrivals, right for departures. A quick glance upwards revealed a silver and glistening green Dark Mark, which leered down at them unpleasantly, the snake bobbing its head furiously towards them, as if it recognised that they were intruders. In the centre of the Atrium, replacing the previous Fountain of Magical Brethren, were three obsidian sculptures of proud Death Eaters, two with masks and one without. The one with the revealed face had a look of arrogance and pride, while his companions stood behind him. His wand was levelled towards the ceiling and a pillar of shimmering magic flared from it as it supported the dark mark above.

Harry's eyes next flew to the entrance of the Ministry of Magic, two large silver-wrought gates that stood firmly behind two security guards. In front of these gates, four Death Eaters stood on guard while a six Aurors sat in each security booth. All of them looked absolutely astonished at the large number of people that had suddenly and silently appeared in front of them despite the powerful wards they knew had been placed on the atrium. The split second it took them to comprehend what had just happened allowed the sixty-five members of the Order of Phoenix to recover from the after-effects of the international portkey. A second later, the battle to decide the fate of Britain began.

A large volley of light ranging from fiery red, eerie green and bright yellow erupted from the Order of Phoenix in a hail of yelled and muttered incantations. Death Eaters and Aurors, still recovering from the shock, ducked behind the heavily warded and shielded security desks. The curses rocketed past their heads, although several slammed into the security desk and exploded in a shower of sparks, and struck the large silver-wrought gates. A loud and chilling gong rung through the large room as the gates shimmering in a near-transparent light, flickering as it dispelled, absorbed or deflected dozens of curses.

The Aurors blindly pointed their wands from behind the security desk, loud and panicked screams of *Avada Kedavra* being the most commonly heard spell as they retaliated. Six or seven glowing green jets of light, accompanied by the noise of a roaring wind, shot from behind the desk. Four of the curses glowed with an intense light, most likely cast by the elite Death Eaters, while the other

three flickered weakly, probably created by the weaker Aurors. The power behind the spell didn't make a difference as Harry made a broad sweeping gesture with his wand and the very ground rumbled as the floorboards cracked and splintered, a low wall of granite shooting from the ground. The killing curses struck the dull rocky substance, which chipped and splintered under the force of the spells. Although the more powerful curses caused large cracks to shoot down the wall, it held strong as a row of Order members ducked behind it, sending forth another barrage of spells towards the security desks, which also held firm under the intense spell-fire it was being placed under.

"Bowden, Jordan!" Harry roared over the loud noise of battle, his green eyes finding the most elite members of his raiding team in the crowd. The two females, one old, grey and weathered, the other young, beautiful and sleek, but both very dangerous, darted their eyes his way as they urged Order members to duck behind Harry's conjured wall.

"What is it, sir?" Jordan screamed back as few more curses rocketed from the Aurors, this time in the form of shimmering and glowing pillars and blasts of light. The various explosive curses struck the granite barrier with a deafening roar, some of the Order members falling back under the concussive power of the strikes. A few large chunks of the granite wall were torn apart, debris flying through the air around the centre of the battlefield. However, under the direction of a grim-looking Hestia Jones, the holes were instantly repaired, a grey cloud of mist billowing into them and solidifying into hard stone.

"Form walls on either side of the fireplaces!" Harry instructed in a yell as he moved through the throng of Order members. "Get our people to duck behind them! Keep the fortifications around this statue and hold the position!"

Jordan and Bowden nodded simultaneously, neither flinching as another roaring wave of explosive curses struck the thick, granite wall. A loud booming noise roared in the Atrium as another chunk was blown from the conjured wall. The ground rumbled slightly, rocking the Azkaban Guard on their feet, while Jordan and Bowden simultaneously turned around, directing the Azkaban Guards closest to them to line up as they conjured up a long granite wall on either side of the large statue. The granite shimmered as Azkaban Guards ducked behind it, muttering protective and strengthening charms as they waited for the eventual horde of Aurors to burst from the fireplaces.

Meanwhile, Harry had pushed his way to the front wall, his eyes narrowed and hard as he stared at the security desk on the left, which shimmered with an almost-transparent magic as another barrage of brightly coloured streaks of light slammed into it. Explosive curses detonated with loud bangs, ripping up floorboards and sending wooden shards flying through the air, but the desks remained unharmed. Harry frowned and briefly wondered if Voldemort himself had performed the enchantments on these desks himself. The Aurors and Death

Eaters sheltered behind these security desks sent out another barrage of powerful explosion and destruction curses, blinding pillars of powerful magic and bursts of intense purple light rocketing towards the forward line of the Order of Phoenix. The Azkaban Guard ducked behind their wall again as the first of the explosion curses detonated on the granite with bright flares and loud booming roars, but Harry, seeing a menacing flash of intense purple light travelling towards a weakened section of the wall, instantly swept his wand out in front of him.

The flash of dark purple light, radiating with powerful, dark magic, was suddenly intercepted as a loop of crackling and sizzling white electricity enveloped it. This whip of electricity, which surrounded the flash of purple, seared into the very air, the smell of ozone filling the nostrils of the nearby Azkaban Guard, tingles running down their backs. Harry brandished his crackling whip, flicking it back over the heads of the Order members, who were hurriedly repairing their walls, and slapping it down towards one of the security desk. The hissing and spluttering coil of lightning left the tip of his wand, still enveloped around the powerful destruction curse, and slammed into the desk. Instantly, it flared in a burst of intense purple and blue light, and Harry had to squint and lean onto the barrier in front of him as an explosion tore through the room, the ground rumbling ominously. The power of his whip of restrained bolts of lightning, combined with the sheer destructive power of the trapped flash of purple light, pierced the protective wards on the security desk, which was suddenly blown apart by a powerful force. The Azkaban Guard instantly sent volleys of shimmering magic towards the splintered and ruined desk and towards the suddenly exposed Aurors, who were jerked, tumbled and slapped aside as they were struck by a multitude of curses, most tumbling to the ground in the throes of death.

As the rank of Azkaban Guard turned their attention to the last security desk, a constant hail of coloured curses striking upon the shimmering, translucent barrier that protected the last of the Aurors, Harry took a deep breath and jumped over the barrier, landing in a crouch. As he rose, he concentrated with grim determination and flicked his wand in a series of quick but complicated movements.

*"Mallus Custodiet!"* He muttered softly but with feeling. The tip of his wand, which was aimed at the last security desk, suddenly glowed with a dim red light while directly in front of the desk, the air contorted and glowed as a blazing ruby energy formed together, twisting and weaving madly until it had formed a crude representation of a hammer.

Harry lifted his wand and slammed it down and in front of him, the glowing hammer of energy moved with the wand, rising upwards and slamming down onto the wards, which shimmered and flickered at the blow. Harry continued his movements, the tip of his wand flaring with a bright red light as the hammer struck again the wards again, again and again. The protective wards around the

security desk shimmered under each powerful blow, flickering weakly as it was drained of its power. After a dozen or so blows from the hammer, the wards suddenly splintered and broke apart in a noise resembling a shower of tinkling glass, fading away in a soft throb of light.

“Now!” Harry roared to the Azkaban Guard, gesturing towards the security desk with his wand. From behind him, his soldiers instantly obeyed him and another barrage of blinding pillars of light and cascading waves of magic zoomed towards the vulnerable security desk, pounding away at the now-frail structure. The desk collapsed under the powerful explosions and disappeared under a flare of bright light, flames spurting from underneath it as it was torn apart. The Aurors and Death Eaters behind the desk might have tried to get away from it but the entire area suddenly disappeared under a column of fiery red, purple and black flames as the ground rumbled once more. The flames died away quickly as the magic of the spells evaporated away and the atrium quickly fell silent as the last of its guards were killed and the sounds of battle stopped.

Harry grimly surveyed and assessed the silver-wrought gates leading out of the atrium, knowing that it would take much more effort to bring them down as he did the security desks, as well as a certain amount of time that he frankly, did not have. Harry turned back to the awaiting Azkaban Guard, who eyed him with an expectant look in their eyes as they awaited his final orders.

“Ron, Kingsley, you’ll come with me,” Harry begun softly, although his voice somehow drifted through the large atrium. “Jordan, Bowden, I want you to concentrate our defence here. The Aurors will arrive shortly and in great numbers. Hermione, Neville, I want you to continually maintain those walls. They may be the only cover you have when the Aurors arrive in force. Ginny, Luna, I want you to distribute Healing Potions and heal the wounded. You’ll need every wand.”

“Sir, with those fireplaces there, we’re going to be attacked from all sides,” Jordan remarked quietly, but not in protest.

Harry let a cold grim smile come over his face as he assessed the fireplaces on the left and right and raised his wand. Although he uttered no words, the tip of his wand suddenly pulsed with an eerie fiery light, as if an entire bonfire had been compressed into wooden rod. A wave of heat seemed to wash over the Atrium as Harry concentrated, his eyes narrowed in thought, and just when it seemed that the heat was increasing to the point of painful, Harry swished his wand. Two shimmering ribbons of scarlet and orange light flittered through the air as it flew towards the fireplaces, diving into the stone along the entire expanse of the hall. Another wave of heat shot through the atrium as a dull, red line, looking much like paint, appeared no less than a metre away from all the fireplaces from both sides of the room.

"The Aurors will come here, with or without the fireplaces," Harry said quietly as he lowered his wand. "By doing it this way, we can lure them into a trap."

Jordan nodded slowly, eying the red lines splayed out across the ground with a look of bemusement, but Hermione and a few others seemed to have recognised the curse he had just set with dawning expressions of realization.

"Hermione, it will also be your responsibility to support that curse as long as it is possible," Harry said quietly. Hermione nodded quickly as he continued. "Eventually, it will be broken. Make it last as long as possible."

"Of course," Hermione agreed instantly.

Harry made a gesturing noise to Ron and Kingsley and eyed the silver-wrought gates in front of him, narrowing his eyes in speculation. He heard the rustling of robes as Ron and Kingsley jumped over the granite barrier and wordlessly approached him and as he was about to approach the gates, a voice from behind him halted him.

"We'll hold until you return," Jordan said softly from behind him,

Harry wordlessly glanced from over his shoulder, his eyes roaming the determined and unafraid Azkaban Guard, who had lined up behind their barricades and were watching him leave with a mixture of apprehension, sadness, appreciation and belief- belief that he could do what he had claimed.

"I know," was all he said with a small smile of appreciate curve his lips.

Suddenly a piercing alarm started to wail through the atrium and the Ministry. Harry winced and turned to the silvery gates, raising his wand and concentrating very carefully as muttered a long Latin incantation. A glowing white light pulsed from the tip of his wand, swirling around him in a lazy spiral motion as it enveloped his form and branching off to encompass Ron and Kingsley. Harry's eyes were closed as he moved forward and he quickly tucked his wand behind his ear, before he grabbed one Ron and Kingsley's hands and strode forward. He continued to wordlessly channel the spell as he approached the silver-wrought gates. Because Harry's eyes were shut, he didn't see the translucent barrier that suddenly shimmered around the large, silver-wrought gates as they strained against the three people trying to penetrate them. But the glowing and pulsing white light had formed an aura around the group, which struggled with the wards, and Harry easily stepped into and through them. As soon as they were past the gates, the glowing light faded away and Harry opened his piercing green eyes, the last remnants of lingering magic still flowing through him as he let go of the hands and took up his wand from behind his ear.

The alarm continued to blare loudly as Harry, Ron and Kingsley moved away from the gates, away from the rest of the Order of Phoenix, and down a short hallway. At the end, six elevator doors had been built into the walls and the indicator above them, a smoky ball of grey light that contained a number, were all decreasing to zero, this floor. Reinforcements were already on their way. Harry reached these elevators and flicked his wand in a subtle manner, tapping himself in various places as he murmured a phrase. His body suddenly shimmered and faded from sight just as the first of the elevators reached the atrium floor. Ron and Kingsley took a step back, their wands rising as the doors begun to open, but something radiating an icy-coldness suddenly clasped their arms.

Instantly, they shivered as a wave of icy chills swept over them, trickling over their entire bodies in an instant, just as the first Aurors emerged from the elevators. Each elevator was packed to the brim with the blue-robed wizards and witches and approximately seventy of them rushed forward, straight towards them. Ron let his eyes widen and tried to pull of the cold grip of Harry, but the clasping hand tightened and Ron felt another peculiar sensation flood through him. He suddenly felt as if he just lost a lot of weight and then flinched as an Auror unknowingly charged at his invisible form. However, the running man simply dove straight through him and Ron started in surprise, before he was dragged through the crowd of Aurors, who felt nothing more than an icy chill run down their spines. Had any of them been more advanced in the magical arts then they would have paid more attention to the feeling, but they dismissed it easily as they charged down the hallway, their wands levelled, and the sounds of the battle started up again as the first Aurors attacked the defending members of the Order of Phoenix.

Meanwhile, Ron and Kingsley were dragged into an empty elevator just as the doors were closing. As soon as they did, the icy and weightless feeling Ron had been feeling suddenly disappeared as he shimmered back into view, his body re-substantiating and become solid once more. He shook his head dazedly, noticing Kingsley doing the same, while Harry, who looked unruffled and unaffected, pressed one of the antiquated buttons on the elevator.

"We're really doing this," Ron muttered softly to himself as he took a deep breath, while Kingsley stretched out his muscles, cracking his head into place as he prepared himself for what lay ahead.

"Yes," Harry answered with a stony face, but his eyes gleamed in anticipation. "Our next stop is the Department of Mysteries. Voldemort's quarters are reportedly near that location and we'll be getting information on the way. We find him, I duel him, and I kill him. It's as easy as that."

"I wouldn't say easy," Ron said slowly. "They'll be a lot of guards now that we've caused this ruckus. Are you sure that you'll be able to find him?"

““I’m more powerful than I ever have been before and Voldemort is at his weakest. Voldemort will duel me alone,” Harry answered with certainty. “I’m certain of it. I know his mind. The prophecy will end today, one way or another.”

“If you say so,” Ron sighed, but he gripped his wand tighter as the elevator descended with a series of loud jangles and clanks. Despite his reservations, he would once again stand by Harry as he always had, and Ron begun to quickly review his most powerful spells in his head. He had a feeling that he would need them all very shortly.

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The elevator doors opened with a loud whirring noise and Harry was the first to step out into the corridor, his wand held high. Flickering torches had been bolted to the walls and the light that emanated from them cast an eerie glow in the shadowy corridor. The walls were bare; there were no windows or doors save for one on the right, towards the very end of the long corridor. Towards the left and down the stairs, Harry remembered with startling clarity, lay the deep and secure courtrooms.

“Hey, what’s happening?” Somebody called out loudly as emerged from the stairs from the left. Harry swung his head, his eyes gleaming dangerously in the flickering torchlight as he quickly scanned the approaching wizards, at least five of them. They were not wearing the robes of the Auror but rather the robes of the standard Magical Law Enforcement officers. In other words, they were security guards.

“Hang on, you’re...” One of the wizards, a chubby man with a gleaming black moustache started, before his face paled, his eyes went wide and his mouth wordlessly opened and closed in fear. “B-But...W-what...I can’t...”

The other guards seemed to be just as transfixed and frozen with fear as the first and when Harry easily swiped his wand with a wordless *Petrificus Totalus*, the entire ground were caught off guard as they binding magic snapped their legs and arms together, their wands falling from their suddenly loose hands as they toppled to the ground in a big heap. An instant later, a coil of ropes snapped around each of them, locking them even closer together. Only their eyes were able to move, darting frantically in fear as Harry regarded them for another second before dismissing them.

The alarm continued to blare, although it was very hard to hear this deep in the Ministry, and Harry turned back to the small, black door at the end of the corridor, eyeing it without emotion. As Harry, Ron and Kingsley silently approached it, walking down the long corridor and leaving the bound guards behind, it suddenly opened as six Aurors burst from it, slamming it shut just as quickly. All of them were talking quickly and loudly to each other but they suddenly stopped as they



saw the three figures approaching them, unable to identify them in the darkened corridor.

“Hey, this area’s been closed off!” One of them shouted in annoyance. “And the Order of Phoenix is here! Get back up to your department and...”

He was interrupted as a powerful force suddenly grabbed his ankle. He let out a strangled yell of fear as he was suddenly flipped upside down by this invisible force, a yell that was echoed by his team as they suffered the same fate. They dangled over the ground for a split-second, before they were suddenly thrown into the corridor wall, and a series of cracks, crunches and cries of pain filled the air. Suddenly, the group of Aurors was hurled away from the door and down the corridor with great force, passing the three figures, one who was idly flicking his wand. One of the Aurors, the one who had shouted, managed to catch a glimpse of the lead figure and piercing green eyes met his own. Just as the knowledge of who that wizard really was entered his mind, the group slammed roughly into ground and the Auror’s mind went dark as he was knocked out.

Harry eyed the fallen Aurors, noting that one or two of them were still twitching with groans of pain but like the security guards, he dismissed their broken bodies and turned back to the small, black door. Suddenly, diving in from the roof and ignoring the solid rock that stood in its path, a silvery misty streak of light slowly hovered down to Harry. Harry allowed a twitch of a smile to ghost his lips as he reached out and touched the messaging spell with his left hand. The silvery mist suddenly shot inside of him and just as if she had been standing next to him, Harry’s spy whispered a message into his ear.

*“The Dark Lord has left his private rooms and will be entering the corridor outside of the Department of Mysteries in a matter of seconds. If you are not there by now, then hurry!”*

“What was that?” Kingsley asked in his deep baritone.

Harry opened his mouth to reply when the small black door swung open once more and three figures stepped out. Two of them were Death Eaters but unlike other Death Eaters, they were dressed in black robes with a silvery-green trim. Their masks were not white but pure silver and they held slim wooden staff. Each staff had a gemstone at the tip, which glowed with flickering chaotic and dark power. The eyes behind the masks were blank and dull as they regarded Harry Potter, Ronald Weasley and Kingsley Shacklebolt, three powerful and deadly wizards, without a hint of fear or apprehension. They were Voldemort’s personal guard, his most trusted Death Eaters. Their minds had been ruthlessly stripped away, their personalities shattered and broken. All they knew was that they lived and died at the Dark Lord’s command.

However, it was the figure behind the two Death Eaters that garnered the most attention. Lord Voldemort, his crimson eyes gleaming with anger and satisfaction, his pale and thin form clad in the darkest of robes, his spindly fingers idly tapping his wand. A silvery locket, ornate in design, hung from Voldemort's neck and the wicked raw scar Harry had given him in Azkaban still remained. For a moment, piercing green eyes met gleaming crimson and nobody moved an inch. Finally, without any more hesitation or talk, Lord Voldemort, ruler of the Isles, Lord of the Ministry of Magic and perhaps one of the most powerful dark wizards in history, gestured to Ron and Kingsley, his crimson eyes flaring with power.

"Kill the spares," He hissed coldly, his eyes never leaving Harry's. The two Death Eaters beside him obediently moved forward, raising their staffs menacingly. Dark magic cackled at the gemstones, arcs of ebony, silver and violet hissing and spluttering as Ron and Kingsley took one quick look towards their leader. Harry gave a short and sharp nod and without a moment's hesitation, the two Order members jumped forward, their wands flicking through the air. The Death Eaters moved with an unnatural grace, sidestepping simultaneously and jabbing forward with their staffs. Dark magic roared with power as it lanced through the air, but it was deflected by a hastily conjured corporeal shield. Ron buckled back under the blow while Kingsley, moving with far more speed than one would have thought possible, ducked, letting the powerful blast of magic shatter the stone in the wall behind him before recommencing his duel as his wand let loose a fiery jet of glistening magic, which the Death Eater blocked with a swipe of his staff.

"Your friends will die," Voldemort remarked coldly, his high-pitch voice grating with pleasure and his crimson eyes occasionally flickered to the duel behind Harry as the Death Eaters and Order leaders moved down the corridor, their duelling taking large chunks out of the wall. The darkness of the corridor was lit up by hues of many different colours as curses flashed and blasted away towards their opponents, although it was a sickly green that was the most common hue. "They always do."

"They're more capable than you might think," Harry answered softly, his green eyes narrowing as he regarded his rival, his nemesis, his arch-enemy. "And if they're in trouble, I can come back and help them when I'm done with you."

"When you're done with me?" Voldemort asked chillingly, a slight laugh in his voice. However, his crimson eyes were darkening with fury and rage as power flashed through them. "Do you believe that I, Lord Voldemort, will fall so easily?"

"Yes," Harry responded simply, a cold smile spreading across his face. "My powers have never been stronger and your immortality has never been so threatened."

Lord Voldemort let his fury and anger roar through him, the chaotic and dark nature of his magic searing into his veins. He unconsciously bared his sharp, pointy teeth, one hand idly caressing his last Horcrux.

“So, your intention is to defeat me,” He said softly but coldly. “I had been led to believe that you were seeking new fortifications.”

“Say, Hogwarts, perhaps?” Harry asked, the innocence laced in his voice mingling quite badly with the triumph.

“My, my,” Voldemort uttered softly, anger flickering through his face. “You have done this properly. Tell me, Harry, who is the ever-elusive spy that has managed to deceive me?”

Harry merely smiled and didn't say a word as he levelled his wand and power suddenly warped around his strong frame, ruffling his dark hair and his long, black cloak. Lord Voldemort let his own dark powers twist through his sickly-looking frame, an aura of danger and menace suddenly appearing around his frame. With a casual ease that belied the very importance of the situation, Voldemort withdrew his wand and held it aloft. The duel of the century was about to begin.

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“*Avada Kedavra!*” Voldemort roared with great anger, his crimson eyes flaring as he let his dark powers flow through his wand. A flash of sickly green light burst from his wand, accompanied by the noise of a loud roaring wind, but Harry sidestepped it, his emerald eyes glittering furiously as he lunged forward with his wand.

*Flagrate vires!* Harry mentally commanded and the tip of his wand suddenly glowed in a powerful ruby light as he closed the distance between Voldemort, jabbing it at him furiously. Voldemort swiped his wand up; something silver flashed through the air as he parried the curse and the wall next to him was suddenly gouged, molten rock dripping to the ground as the rock was parted by a red-hot and fiery force of immense power.

Voldemort flicked his wand towards Harry and a blast of something sickly-brown and yellow, accompanied by the putrid smell of death and decay, burst from his wand, only to be met with a glimmering globe of solid azure magic that enveloped Harry's form for a brief second. The putrid brown curse exploded in a shower of dark sparks that seared into the stone as they fell to the ground, while Harry lashed out with his wand, a silvery arc of magic slicing through the air with the speed of a bullet. Voldemort, however, deflected it aside with ease and it sliced into the ground, ripping up stone and dust.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* Harry growled with repressed hatred, his wand flicking towards Voldemort, however, the Dark Lord closed the small distance between them and physically parried Harry's wand aside with his own wand. The coil of deathly green light struck into the wall, blowing a small chunk of stone out with a flash of intense green light. Harry tried to backpedal away from Voldemort, his wand flicking furiously in the air, but Voldemort pressed on, his crimson eyes gleaming with pleasure.

Together, Lord Voldemort and Harry Potter duelled as if they carried swords, not wands, circling each other as they parried and lunged. Slim wooden rods slammed together, sparks jettisoning from the tips as curses were half-formed and deflected. A fiery streak of magic was pushed aside by Voldemort while Harry brushed away a shimmering orange bolt of magic, thrusting forward with his wand to deliver a striking jet of blinding white magic. Voldemort took a step backwards and suddenly a large corporeal shield of silver and green with a visage of two entwined serpents appeared. The blinding streak of magic struck upon it and dissipated away as Voldemort flicked his wand sharply.

*"Kurosucide!"* He spat out with feeling. Harry's eyes widened and he took a step backwards, his wand flying up with a *serpensortia* as a powerful flash of frenzied and twisting coils of magic burst from Voldemort's wand. A conjured python snake, over five feet long, flew through the air towards the flash of power and as it was struck, disappeared in a burst of gore and blood, most of its body instantly vapourised.

*"Iaculum Mortis!"* Harry returned and a glittering black curse formed in the shape of a spear burst from the tip of his wand. Voldemort immediately threw his conjured shield towards the approaching curse, which buckled, cracked and snapped under the powerful pressure of the spell, before he swiped his wand up with deadly accuracy and severed the 'spear' into two with a flash of silver light. The curse fell apart, magic unbinding and dissipating, as Harry continued on with his attack, a deadly jet of green light streaking past Voldemort's head, missing by a few centimetres as the Dark Lord sidestepped, his crimson eyes flaring angrily.

*"Citivulus cultellus!"* Voldemort hissed coldly, his wand flicking through a series of quick motions. Harry took a step backwards, his wand flicking through the air as he sent another jet of deathly green magic towards Voldemort, who merely sidestepped, while Harry quickly threw out a little wooden figurine resembling a lion. With a quick, subtle flick, the wooden lion was suddenly enlarged and brought to life, colour rushing through its form just as the Voldemort completed his spell. Instantly, the grey blobs of colour appeared in the air, over two dozen of them, and they quickly morphed into wicked-looking daggers that surrounded Voldemort. The lion charged at Voldemort, only to be caught in a whirlwind aura of daggers that hacked and slashed at the giant feline, slicing into its flesh as if it were paper. The mangled and bloody corpse of the lion fell to the ground an instant later as Voldemort advanced on Harry, who held his wand upright.

The air surrounding Harry suddenly rippled as small pockets of air started roaring furiously with wind, a maze of airflows and currents that pushed out in every direction. As Voldemort advanced on Harry, the daggers that zoomed in to slice open the green-eyed wizard suddenly wobbled uncontrollably and veered in opposite directions, slicing through the stone with ease and embedding themselves in the wall and floor. Harry levelled his wand at the approaching Dark Lord and uttered the killing curse with anger as the daggers continued to try and bombard him under the direction of Voldemort's wand. However, Voldemort immediately cancelled and dispelled the spell and launched his own jet of green light towards his nemesis. The two spells flashed through the air with an eerie glow and collided with each other, but there was no resulting explosion as they simply shot *through* the other and towards their opponents, who identically sidestepped. The Killing Curse had no magical counter, not even itself.

Harry's killing curse, missing Voldemort, struck along the side wall and took out a small chunk of stone, but Voldemort's killing curse zoomed over Harry's shoulder and struck the small black door leading into the Department of Mysteries. The door trembled underneath the power of the spell and was blown off its hinges with great force, revealing a large circular room. The walls and floor were made of black marble and several doors, identical to the one that had just been blown off its hinges, could be seen inside. Harry ducked into the circular room to avoid a circling bolt of icy-white magic that sparkled in the darkened corridor and was closely followed by Voldemort, whose red eyes gleamed as he entered.

Harry immediately flicked his wand towards Voldemort and a roaring beam of light burned through the air, scorching the dark marble ground as it shot out of his wand. Voldemort slashed his wand towards it with great force, enough to make Harry's skin tingle, and the beam parted around Voldemort, soaring past him to slam into the walls behind the Dark Lord. There was a noise similar to a sonic boom as the doors buckled, strained and shot backwards with great force. The walls cracked, tearing away at the marble and the room rumbled, protesting in vain against the force it had just been placed under.

Suddenly, the broken door flew from the ground, the wooden shards sliding back together and slamming back down on the hinges. Harry quickly darted his eyes to the door in surprise, just as the walls started blurring. The chain of candles, burning with blue flames, became streaks of blue as the room circled and circled. As it did, Harry had to stagger back and lean on the wall as a wave of dizziness washed over him. But Voldemort kept his balance, stepping forward in a movement alike to a striking serpent, his wand flicking back and forward as he conjured a sparkling yellow orb, no larger than a marble. He hurled this orb at Harry, who in a moment of dizziness, lurched to the right. The sparkling orb slapped against the marble with a deafening roar despite its size and the room trembled as it spun, the torches flickering madly as they shuddered. An odd groaning noise, as if something were being torn off its hinges, filled the room, but

it faded away quickly and despite the after-effects of the spell, the marble wall remained whole, gleaming underneath the blue light.

Harry brandished his wand, struggling to stay upright, his eyes narrowed as he realised that he had just walked into a trap, a trap that Voldemort seemed to be immune from. A silvery streak of light filled the room, there was a bang like a gunshot, and dust flittered from the ceilings and walls as the light washed away the darkness, the room trembling underneath its power. But when the light faded, Voldemort stood amongst the settling dust without as much as a scratch, although his crimson eyes were flaring with power and anger. On the other hand, Harry was looking decidedly ill as the room circled faster and faster, one of his hands clutched to his head as dizziness and nausea pounded into him. A great force seemed to be pressing down on his body and at times it almost lifted him from his feet and sent him hurtling into one of the walls.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* Voldemort hissed in triumph, his wand levelled at Harry, who blearily looked up as a coil of bright green light approached him. He took a staggered step back, his wand flicking as he tried to conjure something to block the spell, to deflect it, anything at all! Just when it seemed too late, when the curse was nearly upon him, the room lurched again as its speed increased and Harry was thrown off his feet, slamming into one of the marble walls. However, the *Avada Kedavra* curse missed him and struck at the dark, marble floor as Harry jumped up, staggering to the right as another coil of green light struck the marble wall just next to him. Harry responded by brandishing his wand as if it were a whip, a fiery coil of blazing red and gold magic ready to strike upon Voldemort, but the room lurched once more and the coil dissipated as Harry's mental control over the spell was lost.

Voldemort seemed to be smiling in triumph, his face etched with victory and satisfaction. The Dark Lord raised his wand once more but Harry had once again thrown out a small wooden figurine, a horse this time, and with a quick flick, had enlarged and transfigured it into a live creature. The horse neighed in fury as it launched itself at Voldemort but the speed the room was circling was apparently too great for it and it slammed into one of the walls, bones snapping as it shrieked in agony. It fell limp as Voldemort slashed his wand an instant later, a silver arc of magic gouging at its throat and spilling its lifeblood to the ground. With a soft shimmer, the horse reverted back to its enlarged wooden self, which promptly shot from the ground and towards Voldemort as Harry, with great effort, swished his wand. Voldemort uttered a single, hard word and the wooden figurine exploded in a fiery rain of wooden shards.

Harry, however, had inadvertently stumbled to the centre of the room, his green eyes dazed. Suddenly a brief flash of insight shoved itself into his mind and Harry raised his wand with a bellow, pouring his power and concentration into the next spell. A fiery roaring orb of red and gold burst from his wand, expanding and circling Harry as it enveloped his form, covering his entire body with its flames.

Harry felt nothing but a warm tingle over his sickness as the fiery aura that surrounded him shimmered with suppressed heat, loops of flame circling his entire body. As Voldemort uttered the first word of the killing curse, a single small missile of flame shot from the aura towards him, and he wordlessly sidestepped, just as an entire wave of fiery missiles emanated from the aura of flames surrounding Harry.

Voldemort growled in anger and instead summoned a sparkling globe of bronze magic to completely envelop his form, deflecting the spluttering and hissing fiery missiles with ease. However, with the room circling as fast as it was, it quickly caused chaos to ensue as the fiery missiles shot through the air, reflecting off the marble surfaces as they were pulled and dragged off their trajectories. The dark marble seemed to glitter with red and gold as the room soon became engulfed in roaring flames, fed on by the intense air currents, the continual barrage of fiery missiles from Harry's scorching red and gold aura only making the problem worse. Voldemort struggled to see past the flames, his wand flicking as he tried to part the fiery air, his crimson eyes flaring in rage.

The first part of Harry's plan complete, he dropped his fiery aura while simultaneously applying a modified flame-freezing charm on himself and the searing heat suddenly became cool and pleasant. The fire in the air immediately began to die down as its source disappeared but there was still enough of it to hide Harry's actions. Even though his vision was obscured by flames, Harry, with great effort and despite his nauseas, staggered blindly ahead until he struck one of the marble walls. He frantically used his spare hand to pat down the wall, searching for wood, for a door, for any door. Relief washed over him his hand touched cold wood, despite the flames, and he quickly brought his wand to the door. A flash of dark purple blasted from the tip, almost hidden in the flames, and slammed against the door with great force, vapourising the wood underneath the power of the spell. Now only an empty doorway, Harry pushed himself closer and closer to it, his eyes making and a dizzy blur of black marble with the occasional flash of light, revealing a room of some sort. With a deep breath, Harry quickly timed it took for the flash to appear and after another whirling rotation, pushed himself out of the circling room and into the doorframe, to temporary safety.

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As soon as Harry had hurled himself from the circling room, he caught a glimpse of a large room with lamps hanging on golden chains from the ceiling, of a series of desks, of a large tank filled with green water, before he was suddenly hurtled forward at great speeds. This, however, gave him the chance to flick his wand at himself and Harry suddenly felt himself slow down as he hovered down to ground, before he collapsed in a shaking and nauseating heap. The dizziness, however, was gone and Harry suddenly felt a lot better as he jumped to his feet, his wand clasped tightly in his hand.

But the room was empty of all other wizards or witches and Harry quickly took the time to reach into his robes, pulling out a small potion vial. He downed the first, an ordinary Pepper-Up potion, and sighed in relief as the last throbs and aches of his time in the circular room were washed away by a heated sensation that started in the pit of his stomach and quickly worked its way through his entire body. Harry dropped the vial to the ground and turned around, taking a better look at his surroundings. There were three small black doors on the other side of the room whilst an empty doorframe stood before him. Harry could only make out a black blur and the occasional flash of fiery light as the room continued to spin, although it seemed to be slowing down. In the room, there were several rows of desks, sprawled out parchment littering the tops, but it was the tank full of green water in the centre of the room that captured his attention.

Long ago, the tank had held a pearly-white brains that had swum lazily throughout the pulsing green liquid. These days, with the Ministry under Voldemort's control, the tank still contained swimming objects, but they were far more horrific than mere brains. Harry watched with a fascinated horror as a young baby, no older than a few weeks, swam through the tanks. The baby seemingly sensing that it was being watched and turned to him, smiling wickedly to reveal sharp, glittery teeth. Its eyes suddenly flared with an odd crimson light and its tongue shot from its mouth like a lizard, striking the glass with a dull thump. It wordlessly snarled at him, swiping through the water with sharp claws, before swimming away while using its webbed feet as flippers and disappearing into the green. Another baby swam close to the edge, its entire body covered with a set of thick scales and a tiny tail emerging from its back, before it disappeared into the green depths of liquid like its companion.

"Merlin, what have you done, Voldemort?" Harry whispered to himself in shock. Suddenly he heard an odd clanging noise and he whirled around, his wand rising in a flash. The empty doorframe revealed only a motionless black marble wall. The circular room had stopped spinning at a different room and Harry frowned in puzzlement, before realisation flooded his face and he spun around just as one of the doors exploded. There was great splintering and cracking, the wooden fragments falling loosely to the ground as Lord Voldemort stepped into the room, his pale face tight with anger, and his crimson eyes flaring with power.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" Harry muttered furiously, flicking his wand at Voldemort's direction. The coil of green magic roared towards him with the power of an invisible wind but the Dark Lord smoothly sidestepped, allowing the killing curse to zoom over his shoulder, before he stepped forward, magic flaring at the tip of his wand as he conjured a cone of arctic-white ice. The cone, so cold that the very air around it solidified into tiny droplets of water, shot towards Harry but was instantly liquefied as an invisible wave of searing heat burst from the tip of Harry's wand, which glowed with an intense yellow light.



*Arcessio!* Harry mentally commanded and he swept his wand out in a single, grand flourish. The nearby desks and chairs suddenly trembled with strain as they were dragged through the air by a powerful force. Seven large, wooden and heavy desks flew towards Voldemort, who tapped himself with his wand. As they converged on Voldemort, a partially-invisible shockwave distorted the air, emanating from Voldemort's very figure. The desks were thrown backwards with great force, slamming into the ground and smashing apart in an ear-splitting round of cracks. However, under Harry's wand and mental command, another row of heavy desks flew from the ground, flipping over and depositing their items onto the ground, and shooting towards Voldemort, whose arm became a blur as he magically batted each desk away, the mahogany tables slamming into the ground or the wall, or exploding with a shower of wooden splinters and flickering flames. However, one of the desks slipped past his furious wand-waving and under the mental direction of Harry, slammed into exposed right arm.

Voldemort immediately let out a high-pitched shriek of pain, his shrill voice echoing in the large room as the heavy desk, easily weighing in the hundreds of kilograms, shattered and crumbled away on his right arm. However, what would have thrown a normal human being backwards and most likely snapped off their arm did little but cause Voldemort to stagger backwards, a loud snapping noise indicating that his arm had been broken. In a blast of furious dark magic, the next seven desks were suddenly obliterated in a cascading wave of dark energy as Voldemort jumped backwards, his wand flicking through a series of motions.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* Harry muttered once again, praying that the killing curse would strike his rival and this war once and for all. But Voldemort merely growled in anger, his right arm bent at an unnatural angle, gleaming white bone sticking out as dark red, almost a black ooze, blood poured from his wound, and flicked his wand sharply. Magic soared through the air as one of the many ruined and shattered wooden desks around him shot into the air, diving in front of Voldemort and taking the brunt of the killing curse, exploding into flickering green flames and falling to the ground.

Harry, never undeterred, once again threw out a handful of wooden figurines, and with a single wave of his wand, enlarged and transfigured them into living flesh. Two screeching eagles, three cackling hyenas and one small African elephant stampeded towards Voldemort. The ground rumbled underneath every step as the elephant quickly closed the distance towards Voldemort, trumpeting loudly.

*"Avada Kedavra!"* Voldemort hissed out, his arm still leaking blood, and a green flash of light was all it took as the elephant lifelessly collapsed to the ground. The ground shuddered as the bulky creature smashed down onto it, shimmering and morphing back to its original wooden state, but the three yellow and black hyena's jumped over the wooden idol as they pounced towards Voldemort, who had sidestepped to avoid a deadly coil of bright green magic, Harry's latest attack.

*"Vercundus!"* Voldemort hissed with power and raised his wand. As the first hyena approached, magic sparkled and shimmered around the tip of his wand and suddenly a solid ball of pure azure magic sparkled into existence. The glowing ball of pure magic suddenly distorted as a rows of large and deadly spikes of flickering crimson shot out from it, just as Voldemort swung his wand at the nearest hyena. The beast was struck in the head with the mace-like wand and made no noise as the sparkling magic dug into his thick skull without any effort at all, crushing the head and killing the beast with single, powerful blow. Voldemort swung the mace-wand around again, catching one of the beasts in its lightly furred stomach and opening its innards, while simultaneously banishing a nearby cracked and splintered desk towards another incoming *Avada Kedavra* curse. The third hyena, seeing the fate of its kin, desperately tried to stop its impending attack but Voldemort lunged forward and bashed it across the spine, watching with a perverse pleasure as the cat-like beast was literally torn into two. His crimson eyes gleamed as he glanced up towards Harry, who was in the middle of another incantation, and he raised his mace-wand. With a not-so-subtle flick, Voldemort flicked his wand towards Harry.

Harry paused in his incantation as the unknown orb of magic which had just crushed three hyenas without any effort suddenly shot towards him with great speed. With a single wordless incantation, Harry swiped his wand downward, leaving a shimmering wave of sparkling pure white magic that spread out to form a solid wall of glistening glowing particles in front of him. The zooming orb struck the glowing white shield, the very force of the spell knocked Harry off his feet with great force. He could feel himself flying backwards, his furious emerald eyes making contact with Voldemort's crimson eyes as his back hit something wooden, something brittle, which shattered. Harry winced in pain as agony swept through the lower section of his back and he continued flying through the air, the last remnants of a small black door sliding away from him. The last thing he saw was Voldemort pressing the jutting bone back into his injured arm with a hiss of pain before he began to descend and the room with the glowing green tank left his sight.

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*"Occia!"* Harry muttered as he fell, pouring his magic into the spell as he levelled his wand at the roof. He felt a rare flash of panic surge through him as he twisted and tumbled through the air, grey stone filling his vision. Gravity met and fought against Harry's spell, each involving powerful forces, but Harry's spell quickly triumphed and he was quickly slowing down. After one last twist to get him on his feet, he landed on grey stone, biting his lip to stifle the cry of pain as agony flared up in his lower back. He grimaced in pain and tapped his head with his wand, muttering something faintly lyrical. Golden light seeped into his body, filling his veins with pleasurable warmth and the pain in his lower back, while not disappearing, faded into a barely noticeable throb.

It was then that Harry noticed the almost-silent whispers and he swung his head to glance at his surroundings, his eyes widening as he realised what room he had just crashed into. He was standing in the middle of what seemed like an amphitheatre, with ancient stone circling around the room and descending in steep steps towards a raised stone dais, where an ancient and crumbling archway stood. The archway was hung with a tattered black curtain or veil that fluttered ever-so-slightly. Harry stared at the veil as if transfixed as it whispered to him, small, soft murmurs that he could not hear properly but nonetheless soothed him. He shook his head as if to clear away the daze and strengthened his Occlumency shields, but it had no effect on the murmurs and whispers.

Suddenly, Harry noticed Voldemort stepping out from the other side of the room, walking over the broken and splintered remains of the small black door. His arm, although bloodstained, appeared to have healed perfectly in the several seconds Harry and Voldemort had been apart. Crimson eyes flashed around the room, locking onto piercing emerald eyes with malice and hatred. Two wands were raised in unison as Harry and Voldemort muttered incantations under their breaths, drawing in their magic and their immense powers as they prepared to duel once more.

Voldemort didn't say a word but, using the great distance to his advantage, flicked his wand in a series of sweeping movements and short, sharp flicks. He easily sidestepped a killing curse, the green coil of magic flying past him and into the broken doorframe, and his very form glowed with an ominous radiance, black magic cackling around him as his wand glowed with a dark and powerful shine. An orb of pure shadows seeped from his wand and Voldemort let a smile of sickening delight appear on his face, his crimson eyes flaring with dark power as sidestepped another coil of bright green light and hurled the flickering orb of shadows towards Harry.

Harry eyed the orb of darkness that was hurling for him with apprehension, having never seen that spell before. However, the sheer power of the spell, power that was standing Harry's hair on end even with the great distance between them, and the aura of pure darkness were enough to convince him to move and he did, jumping down the stone benches and approaching the stone dais as the shadowy orb flew past his head, crackling and buzzing noisily. Magic darted around it, tendrils sparkling in the air as it suddenly stopped and hovered where Harry had just been standing. Harry quickly dived behind one of the stone blocks as a high-pitch wail suddenly filled the room, mingling it with the suddenly loud mutters and chatter of the veil. He just had time to see Voldemort flick his wand once with great effort before the shadowy orb plunged downwards and hit the ground. There was no shatter, no explosion, no bang, but darkness spread over the area, a chilling and haunting darkness that emanated icy coldness akin to a Dementor. Suddenly flashes of red and silver could be seen in the blackness and there was an unearthly and chilling loud screeching. The ground trembled,

stone shifting and vibrating as something pounded into the ground again and again.

The darkness fled as suddenly as it appeared and Harry jumped up from behind the stone bench, noting Voldemort stagger back, a slight weariness on his face. He took a quick glance behind him as his blood chilled as he realised just how close to death he had come. There was a large crater where the shadowy orb had struck, molten rock and steam hissing and spluttering as it cooled. Large cracks had been ripped through the ground, tearing up stone and earth, and something had sliced away at seven rows of stone benches, severing them completely in half. One of these cracks had ripped through the stone and stopped only two benches away from the one Harry had been hiding behind. Harry darted his eyes back to Voldemort, who appeared to have shaken his tiredness off, and his face hardened, his lips moving silently as he recited a powerful incantation. Meanwhile, Voldemort focused his complete attention back towards Harry and his crimson eyes widened as he noted the complex wand movements Harry was performing.

Harry finished an instant later and swept his wand in a broad and powerful gesture. A blinding light flared up as torrents and streams of white and gold magic lanced through the air in a rush of magical power. Raw magic radiated from the pure spell and Harry could feel the hair on the back of his neck stand up as the blinding flash of golden and white light zoomed towards Voldemort. As the torrents of magic raced on, flickering and shining brightly, Voldemort darted his head sideways and with speed and strength unnatural to his pasty and thin form, he jumped down over five benches and landed on his feet as the golden torrent of magic struck where he had just been standing. Suddenly, white and golden blinding light filled the room with an eerie wail the ground rumbled once more, shuddering underneath the strain of yet another powerful curse. The light faded away and Voldemort couldn't help but glance backwards, noting how the stone walls and benches were black with charcoal and riddled with thousands of tiny hairline cracks.

Harry frowned as the mutters and murmurs increased in volume and intensity, shaking his head dazedly as he levelled his wand at Voldemort, a killing curse easily shooting from his wand. As Voldemort easily sidestepped the green coil of magic, his pointy teeth revealed menacingly as he continued descending the stone benches, Harry shook his head again, wiping his forehead as one of the voices suddenly screamed something and he flicked his wand towards a murky orange arc of glittering magic that was approaching. The murky orange colour of the curse was suddenly awash with blue and white, which throbbed through the arc as the curse fell to the ground as if it were a physical object. It struck the stone and shattered into many pieces as the curse, now ice, lost its potency.

The voices were getting louder and louder as Harry approached the stone dais, where Voldemort had just arrived and he struggled to contain them. His

Occlumency was of no use, they voices somehow managed to slip around them in a way that not even Voldemort was capable of. Voldemort did not look to be affected, his crimson eyes flared with hatred and clarity, his wand flicking through the air as Harry jumped upon the dais. The air around the dais suddenly rippled and condensed, icy shards forming from water vapour and propelled by a powerful wind towards Harry, who conjured a scarlet corporeal shield, the surface glimmering with tightly suppressed heat. The ice melted away as soon as it neared him but his retaliatory spell, a glimmering arc of silver magic, was parried and deflected.

*"Atram Noctam!"* Voldemort hissed with menace and from his wand came a stream of ribbons made up of black smoke, shooting through the air towards Harry, who gripped his corporeal shield tightly. But the heat and the magical properties of the shield had no effect on the smoky black ribbon, which loosely coiled around him as it poured from Voldemort's wand. Harry darted a look at the smoky coil of ribbon and at Voldemort's triumphant eyes, just as the ribbon touched him as it bound him tightly, shield and all. Where the coil touched him, Harry felt only cold-ice and darkness, his skin shivering madly underneath the powerful dark magic. His mind was awash with negative emotions, despair, sadness, grief, hopelessness, all cascading and bombarding his advanced Occlumency barriers. However, even with them, Harry suddenly had the feeling of drowning in a thick and black liquid and struggled to flick his wand, his mind barely able to concentrate.

With a surge of magic and a small and subtle flick, the oily and black ribbons of smoke that surrounded Harry flared with a white light and Voldemort took a staggered step backwards as his spell was broken, his crimson eyes flaring, as he gathered himself. Harry took a staggered step forward, shaking off the feelings of hopelessness and misery as he ducked on the ancient and crumbling archway, narrowly missing an intense coil of bright green magic. As he leapt out from the archway, his left hand trailed along the rough stone and suddenly, it happened.

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The instant Harry's hand touched the archway, something surged into him and the voices screamed in triumph and bloodlust. Harry jerked in surprise and inhaled sharply as something *foreign* and *uninvited* tore through him, energy so different and dissimilar to his magic that he could feel every single iota of it crawling within him as if it were a disease. As the unknown energy forced its way through him, Harry did the only thing he knew would get rid of this energy of *wrongness*, he channelled it into his wand and jerked his hand away from the archway. The very wood of the wand suddenly buckled madly as a grey smoky-looking stream of mist burst from it and its very appearance seemed *wrong* and *unnatural* as it burst forward with an *eerie* silence.

Voldemort, seeing an unknown curse about to strike him and knowing that he lacked the time to move, summoned a powerful dome of cascading bronze magic that enveloped him in an instant. His body lay distorted and warped to Harry's view as the magical shield solidified into a pure block of thick, solid defensive magic. However, the smoky-grey curse slammed against the shield and went straight through it as if it were not there. Voldemort's eyes widened as the smoky-grey mist struck him in the chest and although the mist seemed insubstantial and dissipated immediately, he was thrown off his feet by the powerful force and hurled to the ground, landing painfully as he tumbled and rolled across the stone floor. An instant later, he was back on his feet but his crimson eyes flared dangerously, his slit-like nostrils scenting the air. The magic that Potter had just used, it was something unknown to him and not just as a spell. No, this magic, it was something powerful, intoxicating and smelt absolutely foul to his advanced magical senses and Voldemort felt a tingle of apprehension run through him as he eyed Potter dangerously. What new tricks had his nemesis conjured now?

Harry, however, witness the effectiveness of the unknown magic and eyed the archway carefully, his eyes flicking towards Voldemort, who was watching him with a hint of wariness and a lot of repressed anger and rage. Taking a deep breath, Harry plunged his hand on the archway again and shuddered as the *foreign* and *unclean* magic coursed into him, his skin sprouting goosebumps as he touched the *filthy* stone. The voices grew louder and louder until they seemed to be talking loudly into Harry's ear, a mixture of men and women's voices that jabbered in a language that Harry wasn't familiar with and judging by the hissing, spluttering and clicks, wasn't quite sure existed. The energy pounded into his very being, violently forcing its way through his body. Harry, while keeping a hand on the archway, brandished his wand like a whip and once again channelled the *filthy* energy. Instead of a fiery coil of blazing magic forming at the tip of his wand, a smoky and grey whip of mist emerged, buzzing with an incomprehensible noise.

Harry flicked it towards Voldemort, who suddenly staggered backwards as his face tinged with disgust and revulsion, and the misty rope of *dirty* energy flicked through the air and struck down upon Voldemort, who conjured a corporeal shield of silver and green after quickly remembering the effectiveness of pure magic against that apparition. The misty whip struck down upon Voldemort's shield and was deflected with a *chilling* screeching noise as it gouged long scratches in the metal. The whip flicked down thrice more, the conjured shield cracking and rotting as some *unknown* and *rotting* disease swept through it. Voldemort dropped it with disgust as Harry dissipated his whip of mist, his crimson eyes flaring dangerously as he regarded Harry closely.

"What is this?" asked Voldemort furiously, a look of revulsion sweeping over his face with each breath he took. His wand flared with dark powers and with a wordless roar, a streak of rotting brown and sickly yellow magic blasted towards

Harry, who allowed the *dirty* and *disgusting* energy to surge through him again and grimly forced it into his wand. A blast of grey mist burst from his wand and enveloped the approaching curse, but the dark curse simply parted the mist and dove on, making Harry dive back behind the veil in surprise as he sidestepped away from the curse.

When he looked from out of the archway, Voldemort let his crimson eyes flare as he stared into the eyes of his opponents, but unknown to Harry, misty shadows had clouded his piercing emerald eyes and Voldemort hitched a breath as his attempt at Legillimency struck upon the foul and revolting power. He abruptly pulled his mind back and his eyes narrowed with hatred.

“*Avada Kedavra!*” Voldemort hissed coldly, rage pouring into every fibre of his being. The streak of green light struck the archway, which groaned in protest, but little else happened and Voldemort quickly continued with his spell-casting, his wand flicking upwards as he jabbed it roughly towards Harry and the archway he had hidden behind. A scorching beam of light roared throughout the darkened room, silvery light spilling out into the shadows and lighting up the entire room. Magic soared through the air, powerful, potent and propelled by an immense and conquering will, and the scorching pillar of light struck the archway. The archway shuddered and once again groaned in protest, ancient rock creaking loudly as the pulsing silver light blasted upon it, but once more it held under the powerful curse.

Voldemort narrowed his eyes but quickly sidestepped as Harry stepped from behind the veil, one hand still leaning on the archway as a smoky-grey curse silently soared from his wand, a vapour trail of an oily black substance floating softly through the air. The silent curse blasted upon one of the stone benches and seemed to do little damage, until the stone started crumbling and blackening as it was somehow eaten from the inside, thousands of tiny hairline cracks ripping through it.

Meanwhile, the voices were practically shouting in Harry’s ear as he stood behind the archway, his hand resting upon the *dirty* and *filthy* stone. The *unclean* and *diseased* energy within him soared through his veins as he battled with the loud and demanding voices, some who screamed in bloodlust, others in anger, others in sorrow. The veil was fluttering madly under the power of an unseen wing whilst Voldemort stood beyond the veil and narrowed his eyes calculatedly as he began to whip his wand through the air, his dark powers bending to accommodate his next powerful curse that would most likely obliterate his opponent.

“These powers, they must originate from the Archway of Tartarus,” Voldemort remarked coldly, noting Harry’s hand pressed against the ancient stone-archway. “My, my, Dumbledore really would be disappointed in you now.”

"How so?" Harry called back, straining his ears so he could hear his nemesis over the roaring voices emanating from the veil, the *sickly* power still surging through him as an uncontrollable wave of energy, fighting against Harry's very being as it sought to escape its mortal confines.

"Harry, you disappoint me with your lack of knowledge," Voldemort said softly, a mocking tone entering his voice. "Surely you know of Tartarus from ancient mythology, a section of the underworld so dark and horrible that only the most wicked and evil people were sent there. Surely you know that ancient Greek wizards built a portal that allowed them to punish the darkest wizards of that day. This archway contains magic of the foulest sort created in one of the most horrifying places in existence. Or, maybe you do not know this."

Harry didn't reply but he knew Voldemort spoke the truth when the voices he had been hearing suddenly hissed with fear at the name of the archway, but he continued to allow the energy of the *otherworld* to surge into him. The Power-He-Knew-Not, the power that Dumbledore had once told him that it was studied within the Department of Mysteries, continued to surge through his body and he shuddered, his hair standing on end as he gritted his teeth in effort.

"You did not know," Voldemort breathed in realisation once Harry did not answer. His crimson eyes flared with dark delight as he let out a chilling laugh, his high-pitched voice echoing in the large cavernous room, but his wand still continued through its wand movements as dark powers flared up on the tip, the air rippling and warping under the strain. "You came here to defeat me and you have discovered a power that I admit, I do not possess, and you did *not know!*"

"Oh, I knew," Harry replied grimly, his voice tight with strain. "I just didn't know the details. Tell me Voldemort, do you believe in prophecies?"

Voldemort noticeably stiffened, his crimson eyes suddenly wary as he recalled the last time a prophecy had struck him down, the fateful night that he had been expelled from his body as his own *Avada Kedavra* backfired onto him. The extremely potent dark magic flaring at the tip of his wand faded away as he took a step back from the veil, his eyes narrowing as caution and hesitation flickered over his face.

"Not usually," Voldemort replied softly, all traces of his mocking humour fleeing from his voice. A note of anger suddenly appeared in his voice as he continued. "However, I am not ignorant of their power, especially when I am concerned."

"What about the prophecy made between us, that is, the entire prophecy," Harry asked, his voice slightly smug in the knowledge that he alone possessed.

Voldemort stood still for an entire second as silence descended in the empty room before icy-cold rage swept over his face and his eyes flared with power.



"No Potter, I will not allow you to do this to me," He said quietly but dangerously. In an instant, he raised his wand and with a broad flourish conjured a dozen serpents of different colours. With another flick of his wand, the serpents hissed menacingly as they grew in size until they stood as tall as the Archway of Tartarus. *"Kill the man behind the stone!"*

The serpents slithered across the circular dais and Voldemort raised his wand, a dark purple fire starting to burn and flicker at the tip, but as the first of the serpents drew their heads back to snap at the man behind the archway, the tattered veil suddenly fluttered and flapped against itself as a dull flash of greyish light seared into the scales of the snakes. Every one of the serpents hissed in absolute agony as their very form rotted away before their eyes, scales turning putrid and black as they crumbled into dust and flesh darkening and rotting away into nothingness and a second later, the serpents had been turned into small piles of putrid slime.

Purple and black fire was the next to blast from Voldemort's wand, dark searing flames scorching the very air and stone. The smell of ozone suddenly ran rampant throughout the room as the circle of scorching flames surrounded the archway, flickering and jumping madly as it fed upon both oxygen and dark magic. Voldemort flicked his wand again and the circle of flames started shrinking, getting closer and closer to the archway. Suddenly, the flames shimmered with a soft grey light and copious amounts of grey misty-like smoke billowed from behind the archway. The roaring flames suddenly wilted and died an instant later.

*"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches..."* Potter began from behind the archway, his voice loud and triumphant and for the first time, Voldemort felt the first signs of approaching panic. He would not let Potter do this! He was the Dark Lord Voldemort and he would be bound by nothing, not even prophecy.

His wand literally flashed through the air whilst dark magic and awesome power seared through his veins as it was channeled through his wand. The ground beside the archway suddenly exploded in a wave of rippling stone and fire; flashes of silver light tore through stone like it was paper, huge blasts of roaring power struck upon the archway and produced a chilling screech but did little else. Four identical streaks of bright green light, radiating with great power and accompanied with a loud, roaring noise much like an invisible wind, struck the archway and although Potter had to quickly remove an exposed hand, the curses did nothing.

*"Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies..."*

Silver daggers were conjured from nothingness, gleaming with an odd crimson tinge as Voldemort banished them towards Harry, but they rotted away and

disintegrated in little puffs of grey smoke. Voldemort let his power surge through his veins and directed his mind outwards of the dais. The first few rows of stone benches surrounding the upraised platform trembled and cracked and suddenly tore themselves off the ground. Voldemort swished his wand once more and the heavy stone benches suddenly shot towards the archway with great force, but as they approached they suddenly shimmered and became black mist, which dissipated into nothingness.

*“And the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal... but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not...”*

“Equal?” Voldemort hissed, his crimson eyes flaring with great anger. “You are not my equal, Potter, you were never my equal! Albus Dumbledore was not my equal! Merlin himself is not my equal! I have no equal! My powers are far greater than any wizard has ever possessed! You may wield one power but I wield dozens! You are weak, Potter, and I am strong and far greater than you will ever become!”

The room fell into silence as the last echo of Voldemort’s words faded away. The normally composed Dark Lord was breathing heavily, his nostrils flaring as he tried to ignore the foul and revolting scent of the magic of Tartarus, dark power crackling over his thin and pale form. An aura of power emanated from Lord Voldemort as he stood there, so powerful that it literally put pressure into the air, forcing away tiny fragments of stone and causing a forceful rush of air to push out, which created a howling noise as it shot through the room. But then, Harry continued, his voice losing its triumph and replacing it with grim determination.

*“And either must die at the hand of the other...”*

Harry Potter emerged from behind the archway, his emerald eyes completely washed over with grey. A different type of darkness washed over his form, something so *foreign* and *disturbing* that the mere presence of it created a feeling of peculiarity and an incredible *wrongness*, as if it were not supposed to exist in this world. Lord Voldemort stared at the face of his supposed equal and his wand flicked upwards as Harry Potter opened his mouth once more.

*“For neither can live...”*

*“Avada...”*

The tattered curtain of the archway suddenly flapped even harder, struggling against its bindings as an intense and oddly eerie low hum suddenly washed over the room. Small fragments of stone started vibrating as something unseen yet immensely powerful and *different* gathered within the Archway of Tartarus, and finally, Voldemort could hear tiny and soft mutters from behind the veil, voices filled with bloodlust, of hatred, of disgust.

“*While the other...*”

“*Kedavra!*”

The humming suddenly intensified as the voices grew louder and louder, their incomprehensible words of loathing and revulsion stabbing towards Voldemort like knives. The humming was growing louder and louder and now the large stone fragments were shuddering, then the stone benches surrounding them, then the very walls and floor were groaning in protest! The veil continued to flutter madly as small geysers of billowing grey smoke poured from the archway, shimmering in the air as they drifted around Potter, whose hair had suddenly whitened and whose eyes were now completely grey, even the whites and pupil.

Harry Potter's stare fell upon the crimson eyes of Lord Voldemorts and he uttered the last ward in a whisper, which the Dark Lord heard despite the howling veil and the groaning noise of the stone walls.

“...*Survives...*”

Suddenly the howling of the archway dramatically increased in both volume and intensity and Lord Voldemort cried out in pain as a deadly coil of green light burst from the tip of his wand with great power, the usual noise of a roaring wind lost in the piercing shriek. Meanwhile, the Archway of Tartarus suddenly trembled and the veil parted in a tattered wave of fabric as a something huge and immense burst from it. The misty grey power warped the very air around it, distorting it like a trick mirror would, and was so condensed and tightly packed that it appeared solid and Voldemort watched, pain still flaring through his ears, as it drifted forward and stabbed into Potter with force, hoping with a sense of desperation he had never felt before that the approaching curse would kill the boy.

Harry eyed the approaching killing curse, his face oddly blank as the voices shouted and hollered into his ears, and he lazily ducked underneath it, the aura of death and decay surrounding the *Avada Kedavra* straightening the hairs on the back of his neck. He quickly stood back to his feet and eyed Voldemort coldly, cocking his head and shivering as the *sickly* and *unnatural* energy blasted into his very being. Distantly, Harry thought it was odd that Voldemort had clasped one hand to his ears and that it was odd that thick blood was beginning to drip from the Dark Lord's nose, and trickle down from the gleaming crimson eyes. To him, the world had suddenly gone silent. He couldn't hear the rustling of his robes or the sound of his own breathing, only an odd yet strangely satisfying low hum that played in the background like some twisted orchestral hit.

But the main focus of his mind was Voldemort and he raised his wand as he forced the power of the *otherworld*, of *Tartarus*, into his wand and with a grand and broad flourish, he flicked the slim piece of holly directly towards Voldemort and exhaled in shock as the power literally jumped into the wand. The wand was

vibrating, shuddering and shaking, and Harry could barely hold onto it as the power swept through him and through his wand and burst out with force. Harry's arm buckled and he felt something snap, pain flaring in his arm, but he held his wand straight as a giant flare of darkness burst from the tip of his wand. Inside the flare, grey splotches of eerie grey mist buckled against the force that held them in, circling and swerving as if they were alive.

Harry redirected his gaze as he staggered back, leaning back on the archway and watching Voldemort with tired eyes. Voldemort, one of his hands still clutching his right ear despite the trickling of blood that dripped from his spindly fingers, raised his wand as he eyed the approaching *entity* of Tartarus with something akin to fear on his face. He swiped his wand and a corporeal shield of silver and green warped into existence, hovering centimeters away from his form while at the same time, a blinding flash of golden light burst from the Dark Lord's form as a magical dome of glowing golden magic enveloped his form, appearing almost solid in nature. Voldemort quickly raised his wand above his head and made a small circular twirl, and the very ground around him rumbled and shuddered as a ring of thick, jagged stone suddenly jutted up from the ground and encircled his form, blocking him from sight.

However, the flare of darkness smashed upon the encircling layer of jagged stone and shattered it with ease, revealing Voldemort, whose extremely potent magical dome of glimmering golden magic was torn apart with apparent ease. Voldemort raised the corporeal shield, his eyes flaring with terror, but the gleaming silver and green conjuration vanished in a wisp of grey mist, and the dark flare silently detonated in a cascading wave of power. The very force of the explosion knocked Harry off his feet and he landed on the hard ground with a painful grunt, one that he could not hear, but continued to watch the demise of his enemy, who had remained on his feet and was flicking his wand quickly. But no magic Voldemort possessed could save him now as the flare of dark light faded away and coils of *eager* and *hungry* grey mist sprang free.

They circled and spiraled around Voldemort's form, who twisted and turned as potent dark magic blasted from his wand, zooming straight through the misty apparitions and striking upon the surrounding stone benches, which crumpled, cracked and bent under the pressure of the spells. The shadowy dark billows of mist suddenly halted and for a split second, Harry and Voldemort both froze, one with triumph entering his eyes, the other with dismay, before a spiral of *sickly* mist solidified into a twisting and flailing coil of dark grey and black matter, and struck forward at Voldemort's form. Voldemort could barely contain his flinch as he awaited some sort of pain but the coil of darkness seemed to stop mere inches away from his heart and hesitated.

Slowly, Voldemort glanced down at the end of the coil and horror, fear and then agony swept through his mind and he gave an earsplitting high-pitched scream of pain as the coil struck for his locket, his Horcrux. Dark blood spluttered from his

mouth and he shuddered and swayed on his feet, his crimson eyes flaring with pain rather than power, as the ghostly coil of Tartarus entered the Horcrux, which glowed in an immense and blinding scarlet light as the coil *tugged* at something. The shadowy solidified coil of mist suddenly yanked back at the locket, which snapped off its golden chain and fell to the ground, and a ghostly incarnation of Voldemort was pulled out, appearing insubstantial, indistinct and made up of a chilling pale blue light. The materialization of this glowing blue Voldemort, crimson eyes and all, was thrown back to the large and buzzing mass of shimmering coils and disappeared in the billows of grey mist that lazily spiraled around the Dark Lord.

Voldemort was still screaming in agony, his crimson eyes wide with shock as something inside burned in an *unnatural* flare of power. He was shuddering-rocking on his feet as he mouthed something silently to himself, although whatever it was, Harry didn't hear as he staggered up onto his feet and watched as the billows of grey and black coils circled around Voldemort once more. His piercing emerald eyes met the crimson gaze of Voldemort's, who, even with his predicament and facing his demise, regarded Harry with a look of utmost loathing, hatred and detestation. Then, the billow clouds of dark smoke solidified once more and Voldemort was screaming again as they struck at him, digging into his pale and magically-twisted form without mercy.

They struck like a nest of vipers, darting forward and tearing into Voldemort's body, reappearing and dragging out a glowing fleck of light. Voldemort finally dropped to his knees, his crimson eyes continually fluttered in pain and his mouth opening and closing wordlessly as the coils struck again and again, tearing out his powers, his magic, his dark enchantments, and his ritualized abilities. With each strike, the bright flare of his crimson eyes dulled and the strange aura of strength around his body faded, his very form weakening. Finally, the solidified coils of dark smoke and mist tore out one last fleck of glowing light and retreated away from the broken and huddled form of Voldemort, dispersing from its solid form and returning back to billows of gently pulsing smoke and mist that circled lazily through the air.

Harry, his ears still clogged by the strange humming noise, slowly limped forward, ignoring his broken arm, his wand leveled at the fallen Dark Lord until he stood mere metres away, staring down at the shaking form of his nemesis without emotion. The shaking figure seemed to sense that somebody was watching him and slowly rolled over, and dulled crimson eyes met piercing green. Although Voldemort had kept his appearance, his snake-like visage, his thin lips and slit-like nostrils and his pale and slim form, the very air of danger, power and charisma around him were gone. Dried blood had crusted around his nose, mouth and under his eyes and his hands, still clasping a slim, black wand, were quivering.

For a split second, Voldemort and Harry stared at each other, before Voldemort opened his mouth, revealing his sharp, pointy teeth as he prepared to speak.

"Don't," Harry whispered coldly, although he couldn't hear his own words. Images flashed before his eyes as he mustered the last of his hatred, the last of his rage and anger towards this pathetic excuse of a human being in front of him. The faces of those that had suffered under this man's wand, those who had died, those who had been tortured, flittered through his mind and a snarl appeared on his face as his stony facade snapped, his very form radiating with anger and malice.

"*Avada Kedavra!*" He roared with fury. A gigantic flash of bright green light burst from the tip of his wand, radiating death and decay and lighting up the darkened amphitheatre with an eerie glow as it shot forward and struck Lord Voldemort, Ruler of the British Isles, one of the Darkest Lords of all time, Heir of Salazar Slytherin.

Voldemort's eyes widened with fear and horror, dread flashing over his face as the green light propelled into him as death washed over his form, his eyes glazing over as he was lifted off the ground and propelled backwards, drifting over the dais and slamming into one of the stone benches. His body gave one last spasm before it crumpled and collapsed as the last vestiges of life was torn from its form.

Suddenly Harry shook his head as the soft humming noise that made up his hearing suddenly intensified and his head darted upwards, watching as the grey billows of mist and eerie smoke were suddenly propelled away by an invisible force. The tattered black curtain of the veil flapped wildly as the billows of smoke and mist were sucked in, a loud howling noise going through the room as the power of Tartarus' Archway returned to its rightful realm and in less than a few seconds, the last remnants of the grey mist disappeared, the tattered veil suddenly drifted down to its stationary position and Harry's hearing returned.

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Harry regarded the war-torn and battle-scarred room with tired eyes and exhaled softly, his grip on his wand loosening as he slowly limped towards Voldemort's corpse. With a muttered incantation, the body of the former Lord of the British Ministry of Magic arose from the ground, just as one of the black doors burst open with a bang and somebody entered the room, wand in hand.

Harry's wand was instantly leveled at the intruder but he gave a small sigh as he recognised who it was and lowered it as Ron jumped down the stone steps, his scarred face grim and bloody. His robes were scorched and burnt and there was a patch of charred flesh on his left shoulder, but nonetheless, he made his way towards Harry.

"Kingsley didn't make it..." He begun with a touch of sadness before his eyes darted down towards the corpse of Lord Voldemort.

"He's dead," Ron whispered with shock as he moved to stand by Harry's side, staring down at the pitiful body. "You killed him."

"Yeah," Harry replied flatly, His mind was numb and his was heart devoid of feeling as he felt emotionally drained and suddenly very tired as it hit him. "He's dead."

"He's really dead this time?" Ron pressed on, his voice little but a whisper. "There aren't any rituals or enchantments that can revive him?"

"No, his last Horcrux was destroyed," Harry responded softly. "He'll stay dead."

Ron absorbed this with a face of dawning relief, before a huge smile broke over his scarred face, his brown eyes warm with sudden joy, just as another one of the doors slammed open and a mashed and cloaked Death Eater glided forward. Crystal blue eyes danced with emerald green and recognition flew into both as Ron instantly raised his wand.

"No!" Harry shouted quickly, his power flaring as he shot a barrage of brightly glowing silver light, which struck and deflected the shimmering blue curse that Ron had just cast. Ron turned to Harry, his eyes wide with surprise and shock as the Death Eater quickly approached, their wand raised. With a short flick, a golden light pulsed out of it and struck Harry, who made no move to counter, parry or deflect it, and have a short hiss of pain as the golden light spilled onto his broken arm, seeping into the very skin. The bone suddenly cracked again and Harry winced as it was forcibly set into place and healed.

"Thank you," He murmured as the Death Eater lowered their wand and turned his eyes on Ron, who was suddenly eyeing the Death Eater with dawning comprehension. "Ron, meet the woman who made this attack and yesterdays attacks possible. Ron, this is Linden Avery, and she is..."

"His most loyal," The Death Eater cut off as she moved her white mask, revealing a pretty pale face with soft crystal blue eyes and long dirty-blonde hair. Her face seemed to be stern and cold as she regarded Harry, before her eyes flickered down to the body of Lord Voldemort and she went still.

"Hang on," Ron said, his eyes narrowing and he whirled around to Harry. "Didn't she try to kill you?"

"That's right," Harry agreed amiably, a small smile hinting at his lips.

"And you tried to kill her?" Ron continued, his face twisting up in confusion and puzzlement as he eyed both Harry and Linden skeptically, the former wearing an amused smile on his face and the latter staring transfixed at Voldemort's corpse without any emotion.

"Again, yes," Harry answered with a calmness that flummoxed Ron.

"Oh," was all he uttered. After a few moments of silence, he hazarded a guess. "It was all staged, right?"

"That's right," Harry answered. "Between the two of us, we devised a way to communicate with our Legillimency and planned our battles as we dueled, deciding who of us would use what curse and so forth. Each duel was designed to raise her standing in the Ministry, allowing her access to higher levels of information, which in turned helped us."

"Communicated with Legillimency?" Ron asked, his brows furrowing. "I don't claim to be an expert on the subject, but I thought that Legillimency didn't work like that. Doesn't it have more to do with watching memories than telepathy?"

Harry nodded with a slightly smug smile on his face. "Yes, it does," He said, seeming extraordinary pleased with himself for a second. "That's why Linden and I spent several grueling days reading a dictionary. Whenever we wished to 'speak', we would bring up the memory of the words we wished to communicate and send them towards each other. It was all her idea, really."

Ron swiveled his eyes to the dirty-blonde haired woman, who finally looked up from Voldemort's body and towards Harry, her face expressionless.

"It appears that you have your victory," She said softly. "Of course, I knew that you had won the moment you killed him and I'm sure all marked ones know as well."

"I do have my victory, Linden," Harry said gently and a true smile washed over his face, affection and even love lighting up his eyes as he took the hands of his most loyal supporter and enclosed them with his own. "And it can be accredited to your work."

Upon Harry's touch, Linden's face transformed and her beauty shone through as she beamed towards him, her eyes shining as gripped his hands with her own, before she let them drop and saddled up to him, inspecting his body for wounds and injuries with delicate care. Meanwhile, Ron regarded her with a curious expression etched onto his face.



"You don't feel angry, or sad, or anything, now that Voldemort is dead?" He asked, raising a ginger-eyebrow as the woman glanced at him, her eyes hardening.

"I do not care that the Dark Lord has lost," She said slowly, and her stern expression lightened as a soft smile of affection curled her lips. "I only care that Harry has won."

Ron suddenly glimpsed something as Linden went back to tending Harry's injuries, her wand flying over his lower back, something deeper and more profound than he had originally seen and in a rare flash of insight, suddenly glimpsed a deeper loyalty and devotion between the two conspirators in front of him, who whispered softly to one another with small grins. As Linden let out a tinkling laugh, Ron cleared his throat loudly.

"Harry, as much as I hate to interrupt your obviously well-earned rest, the battle is still raging up in the atrium and people are dying," He said awkwardly and almost cringed as Harry's face hardened with determination, and the green-eye wizard gently pushed away Linden and flicked his wand.

"You're right," Was all Harry said and with squared soldiers and a straightened back, quickly started to climb the stone benches, Voldemort's body levitating beside him as he did, and both Ron and Linden had to move quickly to catch up to him as he disappeared from the amphitheatre. None of the exiting wizards or witches noticed the tattered veil in the archway silently flutter as Harry left, before falling still.

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In the Atrium, the battle raged fiercely as hundreds of blue-robed Aurors fought against the entrenched Azkaban Guard, whose brown robes flapped as they darted between the large and solid granite walls, ducking as a flash of light soared over their shoulder. Dozens of the Aurors lay dead, some lying in a pool of their own blood, others with frozen faces set in an eternal expression of horror, and a few dozen resembling little more than scorched, black husks, the unlucky few that had used the Floo to invade the Atrium and had been caught up in a giant wall of roaring and searing flames. However, in the centre of the room, several of the Azkaban Guard also lay dead while others lay at the centre of the fortifications, lying under the wand of Luna or Ginny who desperately tried to heal the worst of the wounded.

At the moment, the fortifications in the centre of the Atrium were under heavy attack as blue-robed Aurors advanced from all directions, their wands flicking and loud incantations roaring from their lips as they hurled flashes of light and loud pillars of sparkling magic at the Azkaban Guard. Spells struck the granite walls from all sides, some blasting small holes into them and sending rains of sharp debris flicking through the air and others merely chipping or glancing off the

sturdy and protected walls. The Azkaban Guard retaliated in response, barrages and volleys of intense light blasting out from behind the wall, but the Aurors, working in large groups, merely meshed and conjured domes of sparkling magic to deflect it, or in the cases of very powerful and unblockable curses, like the *Avada Kedavra*, conjured up a solid and thick lump of wood to intercept the spells. The battle seemed to be at a stalemate when it happened.

As the Aurors advanced, their faces grim, a sudden loud piercing howl echoed through the atrium. Aurors and Azkaban Guards alike cried out in pain as the noise drove into their very skulls and they clasped their hands on their ears. To them, the noise seemed to last for an eternity but less than a minute later, it faded away as quickly as it had come. Aurors glanced at one other, doubt on their faces, while the Azkaban Guard darted their eyes around the atrium. Both sides were wondering what had just produced that noise and preparing to attack once more when a loud cracking and splitting noise blasted out towards all corners of the atrium. Aurors and Order members alike glanced towards the large obsidian statue in the middle of the Atrium, where the three loyal Death Eaters stood upright and proud. However, at the moment, the magic that usually swirled from the lead Death Eaters wand was fading and slowly, the glittering green and silver dark mark shimmered out of existence as the magic faded away. Cracks shot through the statues, thousands of tiny-hairline fractures rupturing the polished surface, and in a loud grinding noise, the obsidian statues collapsed in on themselves, the lead Death Eaters head toppling off the body and smashing onto the ground, barely missing an Auror. The statue continued to crumble, breaking apart and falling to the ground, but stilled after a minute or so, leaving the entire Atrium silent.

Suddenly, from the other end of the Atrium, the silver-wrought gates, a focus of many powerful wards, charms and enchantments created by the Dark Lord himself, shuddered, and with a loud screeching noise, shattered into hundreds of tiny pieces. They fell to the ground in a showery tinkle just as the one of the elevator doors suddenly made a pinging noise. Aurors and Order members alike swiveled their heads past the silver gates and towards the lifts as a series of rattles and clatters rumbled from below as one of the lifts ascended loudly and breaths were held as the doors slowly opened and three figures emerged, striding towards the atrium at a fast pace. Suddenly, there was a flash of light as something was blasted from the approaching group of three and into the Atrium. Aurors grabbed for their wands, leveling them at the figure quickly, and although a few streaks and jets of light rocketed through the air, the majority of the Aurors froze as they identified the object in question, which landed in the centre of the Atrium with a dull thud and several cracks. Aurors instantly parted away from it, their faces expressing shock, disbelief and surprise as the dead body of their Lord, Voldemort, gazed at them with dull eyes in a crumpled heap, and their eyes swung back to the ruins of the silver gates, where Harry Potter, a woman in Death Eater garb and Ronald Weasley stood.

“Lord Voldemort is dead,” Harry Potter declared in a loud and firm voice, his eyes hard. “Unless you hold loyalty towards a dead man, I suggest that you lower your wands. The war is over. We have won and you have lost!”

Nobody in the room, not even the Azkaban Guard, moved as they stared at the imposing figure gazing impassively at them behind silver-rimmed glasses. Power fluttered over his very form, his cloak billowing in an invisible wind and his eyes glimmered with magic. Then, at the back, one of the Aurors glanced at his wand and threw it to the ground. It landed on the wooden floorboards with a loud clatter, which rang through the Atrium, and as if that were the cue, dozens of wands were thrown to the ground, then hundreds as the Aurors of the British Ministry of Magic submitted and surrendered to the will and soldiers of Harry Potter. At the same time, a loud roaring cheer suddenly burst from the fortifications, wizards and witches clasped in brown robes clapping furiously. Scorching beams of light burst from several upraised wands as fiery golden and red phoenixes appeared on the roof, their green eyes glaring defiantly and triumphantly down at the Aurors. A wave of sparks flew through the air as a particularly large member of the Azkaban guard flicked his wand with a loud crow of triumph and happiness, the beginnings of tears of joy and happiness forming in his eyes. Some of the Azkaban Guard just lowered their wands as a look of undying relief flew through their faces and they collapsed to the ground, leaning back on the granite walls and letting their eyes close as tired smiles appear on their faces.

In amidst the cheering, applause and glittering sparks, Harry watched them all with soft eyes as he observed the men and women who had fought by his side and fought under his command celebrate. His eyes glittered with pride and affection as he allowed his eyes to drift over the hall, noting that while many Aurors had looks of anger, disbelief and resignation on their faces, others had looks of relief and even happiness, and his lips twitched as everything fell into place. Most of the Aurors here would not remain loyal to Voldemort's cause any longer. Voldemort's power over Britain was already beginning to break apart, even mere moments after his death. Another small smile curved his lips as he noticed Luna eying him happily, a two-headed bunny rabbit coloured in with the most unusual shading of green sitting on her shoulder, and he let out a small chuckle as Ron stepped forward from behind him.

“So, now what do we do?” He asked Harry softly. Harry turned around and eyed Ron with a look of satisfaction that faded away and was replaced with the familiar look of determination and resolve.

“Now, Ron, we move quickly,” Harry said softly, his green eyes hardening. “There is still a lot of work to be done. Most of Voldemort's most loyal servants, including the majority of his Death Eaters, are at Hogwarts, preparing to spring a trap that we aren't going to walk in. There are still loyal Auror bastions stationed around England and Scotland and the Ministry needs to be weeded of those who will not cooperate with us. The International Confederation of Wizards has to be

contacted, we need to declare an end to any hostilities between England and Australia, and we need to immediately regain control of the prisons that hold our supporters or political opponents of Voldemort.”

Ron nodded thoughtfully as Harry swung his gaze to Linden, who eyed him with affection and dedication, her eyes softening under his gaze.

“With your help, Linden, I can accomplish much of this with ease,” He said quietly, his green eyes glittering with fondness. “Are you willing to serve me once more?”

“Of course,” Linden replied in a soft whisper as her face hardened, her eyes becoming like ice. “When have I ever been unwilling?”

Harry nodded, satisfied, and turned back to the cheering applause and sparks. He needed to get to work if he were to take advantage of this brief opportunity, but as another wave of glittering red and yellow sparks filled the air, this one sent by an enthusiastic and smiling Auror, he allowed his men and women to celebrate for just a little bit longer. Let them have their rest, for they had earned it. The entire Order of Phoenix had earned it with their hard work and unwavering loyalty and in the end; it had all been worth it. Despite the losses, despite the defeats, despite the times where hope seemed futile, the Order of Phoenix had triumphed. Lord Voldemort was dead, Harry Potter had emerged victorious and the Ministry was theirs for the taking, to be reformed into a fair and libertarian institution.

The phoenix lived on...